Theses on the Terrible Community

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This question is a question for a new kind of emotional education to address, one that will inculcate a sovereign contempt for all positions of power, undermine the injunction to desire it, and liberate us from the feeling that we are *responsible* for our whatever-being, and thus solitary, finite, and exposed.

No one is responsible for the place they occupy, only for their identification with their own role.

The potential of every terrible community is thus a potential to exist *inside* of its subjects in its absence.

To free ourselves from it, we'll have to start by learning to inhabit the gap between us and ourselves, which, left open, becomes the space filled by the terrible community.

Then, to free ourselves from our identifications, to become unfaithful to ourselves, to *desert ourselves.*

Training ourselves to become the space for such a desertion for one another,

Finding in each encounter a chance to decisively subtract ourselves from our own existential space,

Measuring to find that only an infinitesimal fraction of our vitality has been removed from us by the terrible community, and been installed within the enormous machinery of devices,

Feeling in ourselves the foreign being that has always already deserted us, who gives us the basis for all possibility of living out solitude as the precondition for encounters, finiteness as the precondition for unprecedented pleasures, exposedness as the precondition for a new geometry of passions,

Offering ourselves as a space of infinite flight,

The masters of a new art of distances.

Aber das Irrsal hilft.
(But it helps to wander.)
— Hölderlin

novels stage a systematic game of the disparagement of the symbolic order of the Father, a game which implies — that is, which presupposes it at the same time as it puts it into acts — a community of affections transcending the sharing of bodies between men and women; all the elements that comprise the masochist scene converge in the sought-after effect: the practical ridicule of the symbolic order of the Father and the deactivation of its essential attributes — the indefinite suspension of grief and the systematic rarefaction of the object of desire.

All devices which aim to produce among us a personal identification with practices characterized by domination are equally intended — even if it is not their exclusive intent — to produce in us a feeling of shame, the shame of being ourselves as much as just of being a human being, a resentment that aims to make us identify with domination. And it's this shame and resentment that supply the vital space for the continual replication of the order and action of the Leader.

Here we find confirmation of the existence of the inextricable *nexus* between fear and superstition which is seen at the dawn of all revolutions; between the crisis of presence and the indefinite suspension of grief, between the *economy of need* and the *absence of desire*. We say that in passing, and only to remind the reader of how deep the stratification runs within the process of subjugation that upholds the existence of the terrible community at the present time.

In what way can we generalize "Masoch's game," and, dismissing the choice between domination and submission, evolve towards a *human strike*?

In what way can the act of playing with the *nexus* of domination produce a transcendence of the theatrical staging phase, and leave an open range for the free expression of practicable forms-of-life?

And, to return to our original question, in what way can such forms-of-life once again bring together solitude, finiteness, and exposedness?

9

Evasion is like opening a sealed-off door: first you get the impression that your eyes have to adjust to a shorter distance; then you take your eyes off the horizon and start arranging the details in order to get out.

But evasion is simply escape: It leaves the prison intact. What we need is total *desertion*, an escape that simultaneously annihilates the whole prison.

There is no individual desertion, properly speaking. Each deserter takes away with him a bit of the troops' morale. By his simple existence, he is the refusal in acts of the official order, and all the relationships that he enters into are contaminated by the radical nature of his situation.

For the deserter it's a matter of life or death, and the relationships he enters do not fail to know his solitude, his finiteness, nor his exposedness.

10

The fundamental presupposition of a human aggregation freed of the grip of the terrible community is a new conjugation of these three fundamental coordinates of *physical* existence: solitude, finiteness, and exposedness. In the terrible community, these coordinates come together on the plane of fear along the axis of the imperatives of survival. Because it is fear that supplies the necessary consistency to all the phantoms which accompany an existence folded under those imperatives — in the first rank of which fall the phantom of penury which is so often introjected as the a priori, supra-historical horizon of the "human condition."

In his *Presentation of Sacher-Masoch*, Deleuze demonstrates that beyond the psychiatric fixation of masochism on perversion and the caricature of the masochist in the sadist counter-type, Masoch's

(Post Scriptum)

Everyone knows the terrible communities, whether because they've spent some time in them or because they're still there. Or simply because they're still stronger than the others, and so some of us have still partly remained in them — while at the same time being outside of them. The family, the school, work, prison — these are the classical faces of this contemporary form of hell, but they are the least interesting because they belong to a bygone depiction of commodity evolution, and are at present merely surviving on. There are some terrible communities, however, that fight against the existing state of things, and that are simultaneously quite attractive and much better than "this world." And at the same time their way of approximating truth — and thus joy — distances them more than anything else from freedom.

The question that arises for us, in a final manner, is more of an ethical than a political nature, because the classical forms of politics are at the low water-mark, and their categories are leaving us, like the habits of childhood. The question is whether we prefer the possibility of unknown dangers to the certainty of the present misery. That is, whether we want to go on living and talking in accord (in a dissident manner, of course, but always in accord) with what has been done up to now — and thus with the terrible communities — or whether we want to really put to the test that little part of our desires that culture has still not managed to infest with its cumbersome quagmire and try to start out on a different path — in the name of a totally new kind of happiness.

This text was born as a contribution to that new journey.

I. Genesis

Or, the history of a story

"There's something to having had a poor and short childhood, something to that lost happiness that one never does find again; but there's also something to today's active life, to its little, incomprehensible, yet always present vivaciousness, which one would never be able to kill."

F. Kafka

"Lay roses in the abyss and say: 'here is my thanks to the monster that didn't manage to swallow me.'"

F. Nietzsche, Posthumous Fragments

1

"Whatever has for a time been understood has also for a time been forgotten. To where no one perceives anymore that history has no eras. In fact, nothing happens. There are no more events. There's only news. Look at the characters that sit at the summits of empires. And turn around Spinoza's words. There's nothing to understand. Only to laugh and to cry."

(Mario Tronti, *Politics at Twilight*)

one that gives the most, the one who knows how best to enjoy it. *Organizing* the circulation of other forms of pleasure means feeding a power that is the enemy of all the logic of oppression. It is true, then, that *in order to not lose power one must have a lot of it.*

Counterposing to the combinations of power another register, one of *play*, is not equivalent to condemning oneself to not being taken seriously, but to making oneself the bearer of another economy of expenditure and recognition. The margin of enjoyment that exists within the games *of power* feeds off reciprocally exchanged sacrifices and humiliations, the pleasure of commanding is a pleasure *one pays for*, and in that sense the model of biopolitical domination is completely compatible with all the religions that flayed the flesh, with the work ethic, with the prison system, just as much as commodity and hedonist logic are compatible with the absence of desire that such logic mitigates.

In reality the terrible community never manages to contain the potential becoming inherent in each and every form-of-life, and that's what permits it to damage their internal force relations, and question even power's post-authoritarian forms.

8

All human aggregations that set themselves up in an exclusively offensive or siege-related perspective *is a terrible community*.

To finish with the terrible community, we must first renounce *defining* ourselves as the substantial 'outside' of what, in so doing, we *create* as an 'outside' — "society," "competition," "the Blooms," or whatever else. The true 'elsewhere' left to us to create cannot be sedentary; it is a new coherence between beings and things, a violent dance that gives its rhythm to life, cadenced at present by the macabre rhythms of industrial civilization, a reinvention of play between singularities — a new art of distances.

self as an illusory difference, as a *substantially other* being, is but a conscience-related remnant determined by the absence of such conditions. The demand for a coherent identity for each person is equivalent to the demand for a generalized castration, a diffuse self-policing.

6 bis

The end of the terrible community coincides with its opening to events: and it is around events that singularities aggregate, and learn to cooperate and touch one another. The terrible community, as an entity animated by an inexhaustible desire for self-preservation, filters all possibilities through the sieve of compatibility with its existence instead of organizing itself around their outpouring.

This is why all terrible communities have a defensive conspiracy relationship with events and conceive of their relationship with the possibilities in terms of production or exclusion, always tempted as it is by the optional possibility that it might master them, always secretly drawn by their totalitarian latency.

7

"A man's worth is not determined according to the useful labor he supplies, but according to the contagious force that he has to draw others into the *free* expenditure of their energy, their joy, and their lives: a human being is not merely a stomach to be filled but an excess of energy to be lavished."

(Bataille)

We know from experience that in passionate life — and thus in life itself — nothing's paid for, the one that wins out is always the

1 bis.

The time of heroes is over. The epic space of pronouncements that we love to say and hear, which speak to us of what we could be but are not, has disappeared.

The irreparable is now our being-*thus,* our being-*nobody.* Our Bloom-being.

And it is from the irreparable that we must depart, now that the most ferocious nihilism holds sway even in the ranks of the rulers.

We must depart, because "Nobody" is Ulysses' other name, and because no one should care to go back to Ithaca or to be ship-wrecked.

2

It is no longer time to *dream* of what we will be, what we will make, now that we can be *everything*, now that we can do *everything*, now that all our power is granted us, with the certainty that our forgetting of joy will prevent us from making any use of it.

This is where we must get free or let ourselves die. Humanity is indeed something to be transcended, but to do so we must first listen to what is most exposed and most rare about humanity, so that its *remains* are not lost in passing. Bloom, that pathetic residue of a world that never ceases to betray and exile him, demands to go out armed; Bloom demands *exodus.*

But most often he who departs never rediscovers his own, and his exodus becomes exile once again.

2 bis.

All voices come out from the depths of this exile, and in this exile all voices are lost. The Other does not welcome us, it sends us back to the Other inside of us. We abandon this world in ruins with

no regrets and no pain, pressed on by a vague feeling of urgency. We abandon it like rats abandoning a ship, but without necessarily knowing whether it's moored to the pier. Nothing "noble" about this flight, nothing grand that can bond us to one another. In the end, we are alone with ourselves, because we haven't made the decision to fight but merely to preserve ourselves. And that's still not an action; it is but a *reaction.*

3

A crowd of people fleeing is a crowd of solitary people.

4

Not to find oneself is impossible; fates have their clinamen. Even at the threshold of death, even in absence from ourselves, others never cease to come up against us on the liminal terrain of flight.

We and the others: we separate ourselves out of disgust, but we do not manage to reunite ourselves by choice. And still, we find ourselves united. United and outside of love, uncovered and with no mutual protection. We were such before our flight, and such have we always been.

5

We don't just want to escape, even if we have indeed left this world because it appeared so intolerable to us. No cowardice here: we have gone out armed. What we wanted was to not fight *against* someone anymore, but to fight *with* someone. And now that we are no longer alone, we will quiet this voice from inside us; we will become companions to someone, and we will no longer be *the undesirables.*

5

All the weakness of the terrible community has to do with its closure, its incapacity to get out of itself. Since it's not a living whole, just a wobbly construction, it is as incapable of acquiring an interior life as it is of feeding it with joy. And thus the mistake of having confused happiness with transgression is paid for, because it is by starting from the latter that the system of unwritten, and thus all the more implacable, rules of the terrible community continually re-form themselves.

6

The fear of "recuperation" so typical of the terrible community can be explained as follows: it is the best justification for its closure and moralism. On the pretext that "we won't sell out," we prohibit ourselves from understanding that we've been bought off already *so that we'll stay where we are.* Resistance, here, thus becomes retention: the old temptation to chain beauty to her sister, death, which made the Orientals fill their birdcages with magnificent birds who would never again see the open skies, which made jealous fathers keep their prettiest daughters locked away at home, and the greedy to fill up their cupboards with gold bullion, finally ends up invading the terrible community. So much imprisoned beauty withers away.

And even the princesses shut away in their towers know that the arrival of prince charming is but the prelude to spousal segregation, that what must be done is to abolish both the prisons and the liberators at the same time, that what we need isn't programs for liberation but *practices of freedom.*

No escape is possible from the terrible community without the creation of an insurrectionary situation, and vice-versa. Now, far from preparing insurrectionary conditions, the definition of the

3

The terrible community is a presence within absence, because it is incapable of existing in and of itself, but only relative to something else, something outside of it. It is thus by unmasking not just the compromises or failures, but the surreptitious family relations of the terrible community that we can abandon them as false alternatives to the dominant socialization. It is by turning its *slanderous* schizophrenia — "you're not *only* with us; you're not pure enough" — back into a *infectious* schizophrenia — "everyone is with us *too*, and that is what will undermine the present order" — that the members of the terrible community can escape the *double bind* that they're walled up in.

4

It's not by getting rid of some particular leader that one can get free of the terrible community; the vacant place will soon be taken up by another, because the Leader is merely the personification of everybody else's desire to be led. Whatever anyone may say, the Leader participates in the terrible community much more than he leads it. He is its secretion and its tragedy, its model and its nightmare. It only takes the emotional education of each person to subjectivize and desubjectivize the Leader differently than he himself does. Desire and power are never chained to any particular unique configuration; it's enough just to make them waltz together to throw their whole dance out of whack.

Often, a certain skeptical look is enough to demolish the Leader *as such* in a lasting way, and in so doing, to destroy his place.

We will have to force ourselves, we will have to hold our tongues, because though no one has wanted us up to now, things have now changed. No longer to ask questions, but to learn silence, to learn to learn. *Because freedom is a kind of discipline.*

6

Speech advances, prudently; it fills in the spaces between singular solitudes, it swells human aggregates into groups, pushes them together against the wind; effort reunites them. It's almost an exodus. Almost. But no pact holds them together, except the spontaneity of smiles, inevitable cruelty, the accidents of passion.

7

This passage, similar to that of migrating birds, to the murmur of wandering pains, little by little gives form to the terrible communities.

II. Effectivity

On why schizophrenia is more than just an illness
And how, while dreaming of ecstasy, we end up self-policing.

1

We are told: anyway, does schizophrenia have a mother and father? We regret to have to say no, it does not have any as such. It only has a desert, and the tribes that live there, a full body and multiplicities that cling to it."
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

1 bis

The terrible community is the only form of community compatible with this world, with Bloom. All the other communities are imaginary, not *truly* impossible, but possible only in moments, and in any case never in the fullness of their actualization. They emerge in struggles, and so they are heterotopias, opacity zones free of any cartography, perpetually in a state of construction and perpetually moving towards disappearance.

2

The terrible community is not only possible, it is *already real*, and is always already there *in acts*. It is the community of *those that stay behind*. It is never there *potentially*, it has no future or

saturated with terrible communities that the emptiness that any partial, voluntary rupture with them comes to be filled in again with a terrifying quickness.

If it is therefore absurd to ask what to do with the terrible communities, since they're always already made and always already in a process of dissolution, and reduce to silence all internal non-submission (parrhesia and everything else along with it), it is on the other hand of vital importance that one understand in what concrete conditions of solidarity the biopolitical democracies and terrible communities might be destroyed. A certain kind of perspective on them has to be taken up, a "thief's gaze," which from the interior of the apparatus materializes the possibility of escaping it. Sharing this gaze, the most lively bodies will bring about that which the terrible community, even in spite of itself, blindly exudes: its own dissolution.

Because the terrible communities are never really duped by their own lie, they are just attached to their blindness, which allows them to subsist.

2 bis

We have given the name of *terrible community* to all milieus that are constituted on the basis of the sharing of the same ignorances — and *also* the ignorance, it so happens, of the evil that produced them. Vitalist criteria, which would consider the malaise felt inside a human formation as the touchstone for seeing a terrible community in it, are quite often inoperable. The most "successful" of terrible communities teach their members to love their own failings and to make them likeable. In this sense, the terrible community is not the place where one suffers the most, but just the place where one is the least free.

1

Whatever it may be, the terrible community is *like* everything else, because it is *in* everything else.

2

Biopolitical democracy and terrible community — the one insofar as it is a self-evident part of the distribution of force relations, and the other insofar as it is the effective substrate beneath immediate relations — constitute the two poles of the present domination. To where the power relations that rule over biopolitical democracies cannot, properly speaking, realize themselves *without* terrible communities, which form the ethical groundwork for that realization. More precisely, the terrible community is the *passionate* form of this self-evidence, which alone allows it to be deployed in concrete territories.

In the final analysis it is only by means of the terrible community that the Empire manages to parse the most heterogeneous social relations semiotically in the *form* of biopolitical democracy: in the absence of terrible communities, the social self-evidence of political democracy would have no *body* upon which to exert itself. None of the phenomena where the archaic and the hypersophisticated are entangled within the Empire (neo-slavery, globalized prostitution, corporate neo-feudalism, human trafficking of all kinds) can be explained without reference to that mediation.

This in no way means that there's any kind of subversive value to the gestures of destruction aimed at the terrible community. As a regime of effectuation of that self-evidence, the terrible community has no vitality of its own. There's nothing about it that puts it into any kind of condition to morph into anything else, to put beings in a dramatically changed relationship to the state of things; *nothing to be saved.* And it's a fact that the present is now so completely

becoming, nor any ends truly outside of itself nor any desire to become other than what it is, only to *persist*. It is the community of betrayal, because it goes against its own becoming, it betrays itself without transforming itself or transforming the world around it.

2 bis

The terrible community is the community of Blooms, because within it all desubjectivation is unwelcome. Anyway, to enter it, it is first necessary to put oneself in parentheses.

3

The terrible community does not *ek-sist*, except in the dissent that at certain moments passes through it. The rest of the time the terrible community *is,* eternally.

4

In spite of this, the terrible community is the only community one can find, since the world as the physical place of what is common and of sharing has disappeared, and there's nothing left of it but an imperial sectoral distribution of police to travel across. Even the lie itself of "mankind" no longer finds any more liars to affirm it.

The non-men, the no longer men, the Blooms, no longer manage to *think,* as they once could, since thought was a movement within time, and the consistency of the latter has now changed. Moreover, the Blooms have renounced dreaming; they live in organized dystopias, placeless places, the dimensionless interstices of a commodity utopia. They are flat and one-dimensional since, unable to recognize themselves anywhere, neither in themselves or in others, they can't recognize either their past or their future.

Day after day, their resignation effaces the present. And these no-longer-men populate the crisis of presence.

5

The time of the terrible community is spiraloid and of a muddy consistency. It is an impenetrable time where the planned-form and the habit-form weigh on lives, leaving them paper-thin. One might define it as the time of naïve freedom where everyone does what they want, since the times wouldn't permit anyone to want anything aside from what's already there.

One might say that it is the time of clinical depression, or rather, the time of exile and prison. It is an endless wait, a uniform expanse of disordered discontinuities.

6

The concept of order has been abolished in the terrible community in preference for the effectiveness of force relations, and the concept of form to the profit of the practice of formalization, which, having now grip on the content that it's applied to, is eternally reversible. Around false rituals, false timeframes (demonstrations, vacations, 'mission accomplisheds,' various assemblies, meetings, more or less festive), the community coagulates and formalizes itself without ever *taking form*. Because form, being sensitive and corruptible, exposes becoming.

6 bis

Within the terrible community, informality is the most appropriate medium for the disavowed construction of pitiless hierarchies.

VI. Notes Towards a Kind of Transcendence

a few prescriptions for transcending the present misery: non-exhaustive, non-programmatic mentions…

"Oh, my brothers, my children, my comrades; I loved you for all my anger but didn't know how to tell you, I didn't know how to live with you, I couldn't manage to reach you, to touch your cold souls, your deserted hearts! I found no words of good cheer, no living words to force your chests full of air with laughter! I had lost the vicious rage to see you stand up, the rage to gaze upon you with open eyes, I had lost the language to express to you my refusal to see you growing old before having really lived at all, letting down your arms without having lifted them first, going down without having wanted to go up. I wasn't strong enough to fight off sleep, to keep it from throwing you out of the world and out of time, to drive it far away from you, because myself in turn, season by season, I too was weakening; I felt my limbs softening, my thoughts coming apart, my anger disappearing, and your non-existence winning me over…"

J. Lefebvre, *The Consolation Society*

8

The horizon, for militants, is the line towards which they must always march. Because all the ones they've lost are over there somewhere, far away.

7

Reversibility is the sign under which all events that *take place* within the terrible community happen.

But it is this reversibility itself, with its solemn procession of fears and dissatisfactions, which is really irreversible.

8

The time of infinite reversibility is an illegible time, non-human. It is the time of things, of the moon, of animals, of the tides; not of men, and even less of the no-longer-men, since the latter no longer know how to think about themselves, while the former still manage.

The time of reversibility is but the time of what cannot know itself.

9

Why don't men abandon the terrible community, one might ask? An answer could be that it's because the no-longer-a-world world is still more uninhabitable than it is, but such an answer would mean falling into the trap of appearances, into superficial truths, since the world is woven of the same agitated non-existence that the terrible community is; there is among them a hidden continuity which, for the inhabitants of the world as well as for those of the terrible community, remains indecipherable.

10

What must be remarked, instead, is that the world draws its minimal existence, which allows us to decipher the substantial non-existence in it, from the *negative* existence of the terrible commu-

nity (as marginal as it may be), and not the contrary, as one might believe.

11

The negative existence of the terrible community is in the last resort a counter-revolutionary existence, since in the face of the merely residual subsistence of the world, the former is content to claim a greater fullness.

12

The terrible community is terrible because it's self-limiting while at the same time it rests in no form; this is because it doesn't know ecstasy. It reasons with the same moral categories that the no-longer-a-world world does; at least it has the same reasons for doing so. It knows about rights and injustices, but it always parses them on the basis of the lacking coherence of the world it opposes. It criticizes the violation of a *right*, brings it out into the light of day, brings attention to it. But who was it that established (and violated) that right? It was the world, to which the terrible community refuses to belong. And to whom is its discourse addressed? To the attention of the world that it denies. What does the terrible community want, then? *The improvement of the existing state of things.* And what does the world desire? *The same thing.*

13

Democracy is the cell culture medium of all terrible communities. The no-longer-a-world world is the world where the primordial and founding dispute at the root of politics is erased to the benefit of a management vision of life and the living: biopolitics.

ings were the houses' vital and center, their center of "meaning." For the rest, since the material conditions of everyday life focused entirely on the external struggle, there were no problems. We make enormous shopping runs to the supermarket, and when we'd ensured that we'd have food and somewhere to sleep, there weren't any internal issues."

I. Faré, F. Spirito, *Mara And The Others*

7

The most dead and the most implacable of the inert ones are those who have been abandoned. Those whose friend or lover had left them stay behind, because all that's left of the person that had disappeared remained in the terrible community, and in the eyes of those who had seen him or her there. Someone who's lost the person he or she loves has nothing left to lose, and often they give that nothing to the terrible community.

7 bis

"...the war against an external enemy pacifies those who are engaged in the same struggle, more or less by a forced necessity; belonging to a group unified by absolute revolt does not leave any room for differences or internal struggles; fraternity becomes indispensable daily bread in those moments when the deepest contradictions are not exploding. Internal pacification is a moment of asepsis projected on the gigantic screen of the struggle 'against.'"

I. Faré, F. Spirito, *Mara And The Others*

6

Everybody knows those who still remain there. They are appreciated and detestable, like anyone who takes care of and remains in places where others live and pass through (the nurse, the mother, the old folks, the public park watchmen). They are the false mirror of freedom, they, the regulars, the slaves of an abnormal servitude that fills them with a resplendent light: the fighters, the diehards, those with no private life, no peace. They end up seeking the rage they need for the fight in their mutilated lives; they attribute their wounds to noble and imaginary battles, when they've really just hurt themselves by preparing themselves for them to the point of exhaustion. Truth be told, they've never had the chance to go down into the field of battle: the enemy does not acknowledge them, and takes them for simply some kind of interference, and with its indifference to them pushes them to madness, to ordinary insignificance, to suicidal offensives. The alphabet of biopower lacks the letters to spell their names; for it, they have already disappeared, but remain like restless phantoms. They are dead, and survive only in the transit of the faces that traverse them, upon which they get more or less of a grip, with whom they share their table, their bed, their struggle, until the passers-by leave, or until they themselves begin to fade and remain there, becoming the inert ones of tomorrow.

6 bis

"Many of the women in the groups had had experience as employees or secretaries. They brought all the efficiency of professionalism with them to the groups when they left work. Nothing had changed for them from that perspective, aside from the fact that they were now undertaking armed struggle. …The meet-

In this sense, the terrible community is a biopolitical community, since its mass and quasi-military unanimity is also based on the repression of the foundational dispute at the root of politics, the dispute between forms-of-life. The terrible community cannot permit the existence of a *bios*, an unconforming life lived freely, within it; it can only permit survival *within* its ranks. Just as well, the hidden continuity between the biopolitical tissue of democracy and the terrible communities has to do with the fact that argument is abolished therein by the imposition of an unanimity which is at the same time unequally shared and violently enclosed within a collectivity which is supposed to make freedom possible. It happens, then, paradoxically, that the ranks of biopolitical democracy are more comfortable than those of the terrible community; the space of play, the freedom of subjects, and the constraints imposed by the political-form find themselves to be inversely proportional in a biopolitical regime/system of truth.

14

The more a regime of biopolitical truth claims to be open to freedom, the more it will be policelike, and furthermore, by delegating to the police the task of repressing insubordinations, it will leave its subjects in a state of relative unconsciousness and quasi-infancy. On the other hand, in a regime of biopolitical truth, where PEOPLE claim to *realize* freedom while never discussing its form, PEOPLE will demand that those who participate in it will introject the police into their *bios*, on the powerful pretext that *they have no choice.*

Choosing the individual pseudo-freedom granted by biopolitical democracies — whether out of necessity, out of play, or out of a thirst for enjoyment — is equivalent, for someone who's part of a terrible community, to a *real* ethical degradation, since the freedom of biopolitical democracies is never anything more than the freedom to buy and be sold.

15

In the same way, from the perspective of the biopolitical democracies unified to form the Empire, those who take sides with the terrible communities move out of the political system of commodity exchange (management) to a military political system (repression). By shaking the specter of police violence, biopolitical democracies are able to militarize the terrible communities, and make the discipline within them even harder than it is anywhere else; this achieves the production of a spiral growth which is supposed to make the commodity preferable to the struggle; to make the freedom to circulate, so warmly recommended by the police and commodity propaganda — "move on, nothing to see here!" — to the freedom to see *something else*, a riot for instance.

For those who accept bartering off the highest freedom, the freedom to struggle, for the most reified freedom, the freedom to purchase, political democracies have, for the past twenty years, organized very comfortable places for biopolitical entrepreneurs, who are necessarily quite hip/"plugged in" — what would they be without their networks, after all? Until *fight clubs* proliferate universally, start-ups, advertising firms, hip bars, and cop cars will never stop spreading everywhere in exponential growth. And the terrible communities shall be the model for this new direction of commodity evolution.

16

Terrible communities and biopolitical democracies can co-exist in a vampire-like relationship because the two are lived either like no-longer-a-world-worlds or like worlds with no outside. Their being-without-an-outside is not some terrorist conviction shaken at the subjects that take part in biopolitical democracy or in the terrible community to guarantee their loyalty, but rather, it is a

radically impossible at the same time. The Leader alone has the thankless task of *managing* and regulating the unobtainable balance between the inert and the agitated.

4 bis

To the precise extent that the terrible community is based on the division between its static and mobile members, it has already lost its bet; it has failed as a community.

5

The faces of the inert ones bring up the most painful memories for those who have passed through the terrible community. Fated to teach something that they themselves have not managed to take on, the inert ones often watch over others like melancholic policemen stationed on the edges of desert territories.

They live in a space that certainly does belong to them, but since it is structurally public, they are just there, at each moment, *just like anyone else is*. They cannot demand the right to a place in that space, because the prior renunciation of such a right was what allowed them to get there in the first place. The inert ones live in the community like homeless people living in the train station, but every step treads upon them, because they themselves are the train station, and its construction is congruent with the construction of their lives.

The inert ones are hopeless, absent-minded angels, who having found no life in any recess of the world, have taken up residence in a place of passage. They may immerse themselves in the community for a certain indeterminate period of time, but their solitude is infinitely impervious.

2 ter.

In the terrible community one always arrives *too late.*

3

The terrible community draws its strength from its violence. Its violence is its true logic and its true challenge. But it does not arrive at an understanding of the consequences, since instead of making use of it to charm people, it makes a use of it to drive away everything that is outside of it, and to rip apart that which is inside of it. The extreme justice of its violence is undermined by its refusal to examine the origins of that violence, because though PEOPLE say that it does, it doesn't come from a hatred of the enemy.

4

The terrible community is a hemorrhagic community. Its *temporality* is hemorrhagic, because the time of heroes is a time lived out as if it were a lapse, a degradation, a missed chance, a deja-vu. Beings do not make events take place therein, but wait for them as spectators. And in this waiting their life bleeds out in an activism that's supposed to occupy and prove the existence of the present until it's totally exhausted.

Rather than talking about passivity here, we should talk about a kind of agitated inertia. Because no position presents itself as definitively acquired in the decomposition of the social body for which biopolitical democracy is a synonym, a maximum inertia and a maximum mobility are also possible in it. But in order to permit mobility, a "structure of movement" has to be put in place to constitute an architecture that people can traverse. In the terrible community, this is done with the use of singularities that accept inertia even if in so doing they make the community possible and

reality to the extent that these are two human formations that intersect one another *almost entirely*.

There is no conscious participation in biopolitical democracy without unconscious participation in a terrible community, and vice-versa. Because the terrible community is not just the community of social or political protest, the militant community, but also tends to be everything that seeks to exist as a community within biopolitical democracy (the company, the family, the association, the group of friends, the adolescent gang, etc.). All such communities tend to be terrible communities to the extent that all sharing *without purpose,* all *endless* sharing (in both senses of 'without end/ to no end') is an *effective* threat to biopolitical democracy, which is based on such total separation that its subjects are not even individuals anymore, but simply dividuals, split between participating in two necessary, yet contradictory things; their terrible community and biopolitical democracy. And one or the other of those must inevitably be participated in clandestinely, basely, incoherently.

The civil war, which is expelled from all publicity/advertising, has taken refuge inside of dividuals. The front lines, which no longer pass through the fine milieu of society, now pass through the fine milieu of Blooms. Capitalism *demands* schizophrenia.

17

The imaginary party is the form that this schizophrenia takes when it goes on the offensive. You're in the Imaginary Party, not when you're neither in a terrible community nor in biopolitical democracy, but when you act to destroy both of them.

18

What disintegrates disintegrates, but can't be destroyed. However, life among the ruins is not only possible but effectively

present. The superior intelligence of the world *is* in the terrible community. The health of the world as a world, as persisting in its state of relative decomposition, thus resides in the enemy that has sworn to destroy it. But how can it destroy this adversary if not at the price of its own disappearance as an adversary? It could constitute itself positively, we are told; give itself a foundation, make itself some laws of its own. But the terrible community has no *autonomous* life; nowhere does it find access to becoming. It is simply the final ruse of a world in decomposition to survive just a little bit longer.

bles in the bed of a fast-flowing creek, the gazes, gestures, and attention have already been eroded, consumed. Something's tragically amiss in life within the terrible community, since indulgence doesn't have any place in it anymore, and friendship, so often betrayed, is only granted with an oppressive stinginess.

Whether we like it or not, those who pass through, those who enter in, pay for the misdeeds of others. And those they'd like to love are already quite visibly too damaged to give an ear to their good intentions.

"*It will pass in time...*" And so the mistrust of others has to be defeated, and more precisely, one must learn to be mistrustful *like the others* in order that the terrible community might yet open up its emaciated arms. And it is by one's capacity to be *hard* on the new initiates that one demonstrates one's solidarity with the terrible community.

2 bis

> "This cruelty could be found in their laughter, in what made them happy, in the way they communicated with one another, in the way they lived and died. The misfortune of others was their greatest source of joy, and I asked myself whether in their minds that reduced or increased the probability that they might see that misfortune strike they themselves. But personal misfortune was in fact not so much a probability but a certainty. Cruelty was thus inherently part of them, of their humor, their relationships, their thoughts. And yet, so great was their isolation as individuals, that I don't think they could ever have imagined that their cruelty had any effect on others."

> Colin Turnbull, *The Iks*

V. Those That Remain, Those That Depart

People that live like sleepwalkers.
Broken hearts and heartbreakers.
Another few notes on the bad use of good intentions.
(Like how strategy alone is not enough, and human rela-
tions are not a "matter of psychoanalysis")

"Aber Freunde! Wir kommen zu spat!"

(My friends, we've come too late!)
— Hölderlin

1

One enters the terrible community because anyone who goes looking in the desert finds nothing else. One traverses the rickety and provisional human architecture. At first one falls in love. And upon first entering it one feels that it was built with tears and suffering, and that it needs still more in order to go on existing, but that doesn't matter much. The terrible community is above all a space of self-sacrifice, and that's disturbing; it awakens the "reflex of concern."

2

But relationships within the terrible community are all worn out; they're not so young anymore (alas!) when we arrive. Like the peb-

III. Affectivity

on why we often desire what makes us miserable (to where we often come to regret the good old days of arranged marriages)
and on why women don't say what they think.
We also talk about the insufficiency of good intentions.
Warning! This chapter is dangerous reading, since it attacks everybody.

Jocasta: What is exile? What does the exiled person suffer from?
Polynices: From the worst of all evils: not having the right to parrhesia.
Jocasta: It is the condition of slaves, not being able to say what one thinks.
Polynices: And to have to bow to the idiocy of those in charge…
Jocasta: Yes, that's it: act the fool among the fools.
Polynices: Out of interest, we force our temperament.

Euripides, *The Phoenicians*

1

Parrhesia is the *dangerous,* emotional (affective) use of discourse, the act of truth which questions power relations as they are *hic et nunc* in friendships, politics, and in love. The parrhesiaste is not he who tells the most painful truth so as to break the bonds that unite the others, who anchor themselves in the refusal to accept that truth as unavoidable. He who makes use of parrhesia, before all

else, puts himself in danger through a gesture wherein he exposes himself *within* the chainlinks of relationships. Parrhesia is the act of truth *which escapes abstract/cursory perspectives.*

Where parrhesia is not possible, beings are in exiled, and they act like slaves. Even if for its inhabitants the terrible community is like a cathedral in the desert, within it one endures the most bitter exile. Because, as an omnilateral war machine which must keep a vital equilibrium of a homeostatic nature with what is external to it, the terrible community cannot tolerate the circulation of any discourse dangerous to it within its ranks. In order to perpetuate itself, the terrible community needs to relegate danger to the exterior: it's the Outsiders, the Competition, the Enemy, the cops. And so the terrible community applies the strictest discourse-policing within itself, and becomes its own censorship.

2

Where the mute speech of repression makes its voice heard, no other speech has the right to a place, to such an extent that it is cut off from immediate effectiveness. The terrible community is a response to the aphasia that all biopolitical regimes impose, but it is an insufficient response, since it perpetuates itself by internal censorship, and is thus still symbolically salaried by/approving of the symbolic patriarchal order. It is thus often just another kind of police, another place where one can remain emotionally illiterate or in a state of infantile minority, on the pretext of external threats. Because children are not so much those that do not speak as those that are excluded from the games of truth.

3

The no-longer-a-world world, this *squared off / gridded* world, lives in a pathetic self-celebration that PEOPLE still call "Spectacle."

16 bis

Though the terrible community refuses the principle of representation, it does not for all that escape it. The terrible community's invisibility to itself makes it infinitely vulnerable to the gaze of others, since, and this is well-known, the terrible community *only exists in the eyes of others.*

The embrace that holds together the ruins of biopolitical democracies, the grip of biopower, resides in the possibility of depriving terrible communities of their freedom to live in risk at any given moment. This is done with a double move: a simultaneous movement of subtraction and repression, either: violence, and addition-legitimation, or: condescension. By these two movements biopower deprives the terrible community of its space of existence and condemns it to persistence because it is biopower that delimits the zone that will be reserved for the terrible communities. By operating in this way it transforms utopia into atopia, and heteropia into dystopia. Localized and clearly identified, the terrible community, which does all it can to escape any mapping, becomes *a space like any other.*

15 bis

It is by synchronizing the muddy and informal time of the terrible community to the temporality outside it that biopower deprives the terrible community of the space of risk and danger. It is enough for biopower to simply *recognize* the terrible community for it to lose the power to break the well-ordered course of the disaster with the eruption of its clandestinity. From the moment that the terrible community falls under the same head as so many other cracks in publicity, it is immediately located and territorialized within a place outside-of-legality which is immediately encompassed *as something outside.*

16

Once again it is the invisibility of the terrible community to itself that puts it at the mercy of a unilateral recognition with which it *cannot interact* in any way.

The Spectacle chews away at all doubts, and reduces consciousness to an anesthetic passivity. What biopolitical democracy demands of consciousness is that it assist in destruction, not as effective destruction, but as spectacle. Whereas the terrible community demands to assist in destruction *as destruction*, and thus to make it alternate with short periods of collective reconstruction so as to make it last.

3 bis

There is no discourse of truth, there are only *devices* of truth. The Spectacle is the device of truth that manages to make *all other* devices of truth operate to its benefit. Spectacle and biopolitical democracy converge in the acceptance of any system of false discourse proffered by any type of subject at all, so long as it allows the continuation of the armed peace in force. The proliferation of insignificance aims to totally blanket the whole of what exists.

4

The terrible community knows the world, but doesn't know *itself.* That's because in its affirmative aspect it *is,* of a stagnant, and not a reflective, nature. On the other hand, in its negative aspect, it *exists,* insofar as it denies the world and thus denies itself, since it's made in the latter's image. There is no consciousness before existence, and no self-consciousness before activity, but there is above all no consciousness in the activity of unconscious self-destruction. From the moment that the terrible community perpetuates itself by acting under the hostile gaze of others, by introjecting/unconsciously adopting that gaze and setting itself up as an object, and not the subject, of that hostility, it can only love and hate *out of reaction.*

5

The terrible community is a human agglomerate, not a group of comrades. The members of the terrible community encounter each other and aggregate together by accident more than by choice. *They do not accompany one another*, they do not know one another.

6

The terrible community is traversed by all kinds of complicities — and how could it survive otherwise? — but, unlike the case of the ancestors it claims to descend from, in no case do these complicities determine its form. Its form is, rather, one of SUSPICION. The members of the terrible community are suspicious of one another because they don't know anything about themselves or about each other, and because no one among them knows the community he's part of; it's a community with no possible narrative, and thus an impenetrable community, and one that can only be experienced in immediacy; but it is an inorganic immediacy that reveals nothing. The displays that take place in it are mundane and not political: in everything, even the heroic solitude of the window-smashing rioter, what one experiences there is bodies in movement, rather than any kind of coherence between said bodies and their discourse. That's why clandestinity, balaclavas, the games of nit-picking, simultaneously fascinate and fool people: the provocateur cop is a window-smashing rioter too...

6 bis

"We're dealing with an apparatus of total and circulating suspicion, because there are no absolute points in it, no threshold to it. The perfection of surveillance is a sum of malice, of ill wills [malveillances]."

said nothing about me; I was the only one in the group that didn't get busted. I had a different kind of relationship with them; it was the great love they both had for me..."

Bommi Baumann, *How It All Began*

13 bis

Once the repenter has revealed the truth about the terrible community, he is condemned because the community lives off the ignorance of its secret, and is protected by its shadow instead of protecting it. The shameful secrets of the terrible communities end up in the indifferent mouths of the Lawmen, and the surrounding hypocrisy that had maintained them pretends not to have known those secrets. The accomplices of yesterday are scandalized, and enter their future hatedness as an informer or deserter.

And so, pedophilia, spousal rape, corruption, mafia-style blackmail — which were all accepted as founding behaviors of the dominant ethos until just yesterday — are today denounced as criminal behaviors.

14

The need for justice is a *need for punishment*. And here we can see the full flowering out of the common, sado-masochistic roots that rule over the ethical conformity of terrible communities and their unspoken bond with the Empire.

15

(**On being deprived of danger: legalization — the betrayal of ideals**)

members. This remorse — *from the point of view of the hated* — is far from being illegitimate since he who has regrets is he who has had an "illumination": under the gaze of the inquisitor's suspicious eye, it suddenly recognizes itself as a member of the suspected project. It affirms a truth that it has never really lived out, one that it hadn't even thought that any such inquisition would require of it.

12 bis

All repenters are essentially mythomaniacs (just like those who claim to have seen the virgin Mary); they act out their own schizophrenia for authority. In so doing, they become *individuals*, but without having faced up to their dividuality; they think themselves — or rather they'd like to think themselves — to finally be in the right, to be coherent. They exchange their real past complicity for a non-existent complicity with the same enemy as always; they take themselves for the enemy. And this becomes effective as soon as they start to repent/regret things, it should be said in passing. But the hated ones can only trade out their unconscious and moderately destructive sado-masochism for another sado-masochism, which this time is consciously and ethically disgraceful. They sacrifice the duplicity of the schizophrenic only to fall into that of the traitor.

13

"Women were treated like sex objects, except when they were participating in actions; then they were treated like men. Only then were there any kind of equal relations. They often did more than the men, they really had more courage. ...And that's how, for the first time, the traitor problem arose: because of the group's insensibility. ...Hella and Anne-Katrine

(Foucault on the *Panopticon*)

7

Nevertheless, since there are complicities in it, the members of the terrible community assume that there's a plan/project to it as well, but that it's being kept secret from them. That's where the suspicion comes from. The mistrust, the suspicion that the members of the terrible community have towards one another is far bigger than that which they have towards the rest of the world's citizens: the latter in effect never hide that they have a lot to hide; they know what image they're *supposed* to have and give to the world that they're part of.

8

If in spite of its internal panopticism the terrible community doesn't know itself, that's only because it is unknowable, and to that extent it is as dangerous for the world as it is for itself. It is the community of anxiety, but it is also the first victim of that anxiety.

8 bis.

The terrible community is a sum of solitudes that watch over each other without protecting each other.

9

Love between members of the terrible community is an inexhaustible tension, which feeds off what the other hides and does not reveal: its banality. The very invisibility of the terrible community to itself has permitted it to love itself *blindly*.

10

The public, external image of the terrible community is what least interests the community itself, since it knows that it's deliberately faked. Equally pathetic is its image of itself, the specific publicity that the community deploys within it, but that no one's duped by.

Because what holds the terrible community together is precisely that which is found *underneath* its publicity, which it lets its members read between the lines and hardly lets anyone outside understand. It is informed by the *banality of its private existence, by the emptiness of its secret and the secret of its emptiness*; also, in order to perpetuate itself, it produces and secretes the public community.

10 bis

The banality of the private life of the terrible communities hides itself away, because that banality is the banality of evil.

11

The terrible community doesn't rest upon itself, but in the desire that what is external to it has towards it, and which inevitably takes the form of misunderstandings.

12

The terrible community, like all human formations in advanced capitalist society, operates on a sado-masochist economy of pleasure. The terrible community, unlike everything that is not it, does not admit to its fundamental masochism, and the desires it participates in organize themselves on the basis of this misunderstanding.

The terrible community is a present that passes by and does not transcend itself, and that's why it has no tomorrow. It has crossed the faint line that separates resistance from persistence, the deja-vu of amnesia.

11

The terrible community only feels its own existence when it has crossed over into illegality. And anyway, all sado-masochistic human exchanges *outside of commodity relations* are devoted in the end to illegality, as the violent metaphor for the surreptitious misery of this era. It's only in illegality that the terrible community perceives itself and ek-sists, negatively of course, as something outside the sphere of legality, as a creation freeing itself from itself. While never recognizing legality as something legitimate, the terrible community has nevertheless still managed to make the negation of it the space of its existence.

11 bis

The terrible community forms fleeting alliances with the oppressed on a masochistic basis, even if it means finding itself quickly put back in the unassumable role of the sadist. It thus accompanies the excluded down the road of integration, and watches them distance themselves, full of ingratitude, and become that which it had wanted to defeat.

12

(**on being deprived of secrecy. Remorse — Infamy**).
The strength and fragility of the terrible community is the way it inhabits risk. In effect, it only lives intensely when it finds itself to be endangered. This danger has to do with the remorse of its

manent, metastatic self-accusation. The nearly insatiable collective self-critique that both the management of the avant-gardes and the groups of informal neo-militants more and more visibly give themselves over to, shows clearly enough how decisively weak their feeling that they exist is.

8

Certain terrible communities of struggle were founded by the survivors of a shipwreck, a war, or any kind of devastation at all, as long as it had a certain breadth of impact. The survivors' memory is thus not the memory of the vanquished, but the memory of *those that were made to sit out the fight.*

8 bis

For this reason, the terrible community is born as an exile within an exile, a memory at the heart of forgetting, an incommunicable tradition. The survivor is never he who was at the center of the disaster, but he who managed to keep out of it, who lived on the margins of it. In the time of the terrible community, the margin has become the center and the concept of a center has lost all its validity.

9

The terrible community has no foundation because it has no consciousness of its beginning and has no fate; it records itself as it goes along, like something that was always already past, and so it only sees itself through others' eyes, through repetitions, anecdotes: "do you remember that time when…"

10

What is "feral" in effect whips up a certain desire, but that desire is a desire for domestication, and thus for annihilation, in the same way as an ordinary creature, comfortably seated within its everyday life, is erotic only to the extent that one would like to make some atrocious stain or mark upon it. The fact that this emotive metabolism remains hidden is an inexhaustible source of suffering for the members of the terrible community, who become incapable of evaluating the consequences of their emotional gestures (consequences that systematically contradict their expectations). The members of the terrible communities thus progressively unlearn how to love.

13

Within the terrible community, emotional education is based on systematic humiliation, and the pulverization of its members' self-esteem. *No one must be able to believe themselves* to be a carrier of that kind of affectivity which would have the right to a place inside the community. The hegemonic type of affectivity inside the terrible community corresponds, paradoxically, to what is seen outside of it as the most backwards form. The tribe, the village, the clan, the gang, the army, the family; these are the human formations universally acknowledged as being the most cruel and the least gratifying, and yet *in spite of all* they persist within the terrible communities. And in them, women must take on a kind of virility that even males disclaim now in biopolitical democracies, all the while seeing themselves as women whose femininity has lost out to the masculine fantasy dominant at the very heart of the terrible community: the fantasy of plastic "sexy" woman (in the image of the Young-Girl, that carnal envelope) ready for use and consumption by genital sexuality.

14

In the terrible communities, women, because they cannot *actually* become men, must become *like* men, while remaining furiously heterosexual and prisoners of the most worn-out stereotypes. If nobody has the right, in the terrible community, to say the truth about human relations, that's doubly true for women: any woman that undertakes parrhesia within the terrible community will be immediately classed as just some hysteric.

14 bis

Within all terrible communities, we experience a surprising *silence on the part of women.* The terrible community's pathophobia in effect often manifests itself as the indirect repression of any female speech, which is foreign and disturbing because it is the speech of *flesh.* It's not that women are made to shut up; it's simply that the limit-space bordering madness where their words of truth could come out gets discretely erased a little more every day.

15

"It's not that women have a hard time carrying out actions; they were indeed more courageous, more capable, more prepared and had more conviction than the men did. They were just given less autonomy on the level of initiatives: it was as if there was an instinctive difference that came out in the preparation and collective discussion of the work to be done, and their voices counted less.

"The problem was in the group: it was the anodyne behavior, the unsaid, or even just someone blurting out 'shut up!' in the middle of a discussion... This

5

Informality, in the terrible community, is always ruled by a very rigid implicit distribution of responsibilities. It is only on the basis of an *explicit modification of responsibilities and their priorities* that the circulation of power can be modified.

6

The terrible community is the continuation of classical politics by other means. I call "classical politics" the politics that puts at its center a closed subject, one that in its right-wing variants is full and sufficient unto itself, and, in its left-wing variants, a subject that is in a state of contingent incompleteness due to circumstances to be transformed so as to regain a kind of monadic sufficiency.

7

The terrible community, in the end, can't *exclude* anybody, because it doesn't have any explicit laws or form. It can only include.

In order to renew itself, it must thus gradually destroy those who are part of it, on pain of complete stagnation. It lives off sacrifice, since sacrifice is the condition for belonging to it. That alone, after all, is the basis for its members' ephemeral and reciprocal trust in each other. If it were otherwise, would it have such a great need for action? Would it deserve such a dedication to its renewal through such frenetic agitation?

7 bis

The less a community feels the sensation of its own existence, the more it will feel the need to actualize its own simulacrum outside itself, in activism, in compulsive gathering, and finally in per-

lation of power, and in that sense they are politically quite near one another.

3

The terrible community, in that sense similar to biopolitical democracy, is a device that governs the passage from potential to action among dividuals and groups. Within this device, only the ends and the means to attain them appear, and *the means to no end* that surreptitiously preside over this process never appears because it is none other than ECONOMY. The roles, rights, possibilities, and impossibilities are distributed within it on the basis of *economic* criteria.

4

As long as the terrible community uses its enemy's economic performance practices as an alibi to justify its own, it will never escape a single one of its impasses.

"Strategy," that hobbyhorse of terrible communities, in reality only betrays the incestuous proximity between critique and its object, a proximity which most often ends up becoming a familiarity — a family relation even — one so tight that it's difficult to untangle them.

The aimed-for demands, insofar as they don't involve destroying the context that gave birth to them, or in other words, the exposures of the gearworks of power that don't seek to demolish them, end up sooner or later going down the poetry-less path of management, and thus bring us back to the roots of all terrible communities.

shitty kind of discrimination wasn't the result of any a priori decision, it was rather something that had been brought in from outside, something partly unconscious, something that came about without anyone really wanting it. Something that couldn't be resolved by any ideological declaration or rational choice."

I. Faré, F. Spirito, *Mara and the Others.*

15 bis

Because the terrible community is based on surreptitious relationships, it ends up inevitably sinking into the most residual and "primitive" kinds of relations. Women in the terrible community get assigned to the management of concrete things, to everyday matters, and men to violence and leadership. In this oppressive, devastating reproduction of obsolete sexual clichés, *the only possible relations between men and women are relations of seduction.* But since generalized seduction would make the terrible community explode, it is strictly confined to the heterosexual and monogamous couple-form, which dominates in it.

16

"It's true that gangs are undermined by highly differentiated forces which set up internal centers of the conjugal and familial type within them, or of the governmental type, which allow them to enter into a completely different kind of sociability, replacing the herd affect by family emotions or State intelligibility. The center, or internal black hole, takes on the primary role. It is there that evolutionism can progress, in this

adventure that thus comes about in human groupings when they reconstitute a group familism, or even authoritarianism, a kind of herd fascism."

<div align="right">Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*</div>

16 bis

Friendships as well, within the terrible community, re-enter the stylized, underdeveloped imaginary world proper to all monogamous heterosexual society. Because interpersonal relations must never be discussed and are supposed to "go without saying," the question of man-woman relationships doesn't get approached, and is systematically resolved "like in the olden days," that is, in a proto-bourgeois and proletarian-barbarian manner. Friendships thus remain rigorously monosexual, with the men and women mingling in an irreducible foreignness that allows them, once the right moment comes, to eventually comprise... a couple.

17

Familism does not in any way imply the existence of real families; on the contrary, its mass diffusion arises at the very moment that the family as closed entity bursts, contaminating with its fallout the whole sphere of relations which up to then escaped it. "Familism," says Guattari, "consists in magically denying the social reality, avoiding all connection with real flows." (*The Molecular Revolution*). When the terrible community, to reassure us, tells us that it's basically just "one big family," all the arbitrariness, the confinement, morbidity and moralism that have always gone hand in hand with the family institution over the course of its historical existence are brought back into play; except that now, on the pretext of saving us, all of that is imposed on us *less the institution*; that is, *without our being able to denounce it.*

IV. Form

On the reasons for the existence of the hated ones and how today's brothers become tomorrow's enemies.
On the discreet charm of illegality and its hidden traps.

1

The terrible community is a post-authoritarian power apparatus. It doesn't have any bureaucracy or constraint about it in appearances, but the fact that it produces so much verticality within its informal nature it needs to take recourse to archaic configurations, the bygone roles that still survive in the congested crevices of the collective unconscious. In this sense the family is not so much its organizational model as it is its direct antecedent in the production of informal constraint and of the indissoluble cohabitation of hatred and love.

2

As post-authoritarian formations, the corporations of the "new economy" constitute terrible communities in the fullest sense. And no one should see any contradiction in the similarity between capitalism's avant-gardes and the avant-gardes of its opposition: they are both prisoners of the same economic principle, the same need for efficiency and organization, even if they set themselves up on different terrain. *They in fact serve the same modalities of the circu-*

detesting their own love for him. It may happen that the Leader will put himself in question, and that's when another will take his place, or when the terrible community, now left *headless*, dies of a heart-rending hemorrhage.

26

The Leader *really* is the best of his group. He doesn't usurp anyone's place, and everyone knows it. He doesn't have to fight to win consensus, since it's him who sacrifices the most, or is the most sacrificed.

27

The Leader is never alone, since everyone's *behind* him, but at the same time he is the pure picture of solitude itself, the most tragic and duped figure in the terrible community. It is only by virtue of the fact that he is *already* at the mercy of the cynicism and cruelty of others (those who are not in his shoes) that the Leader is at times truly loved and cherished.

17 bis

Humanity's share of humiliation and degradation consists in the obligation they are made to assume to *constantly* exhibit their capacities by some form or other of mannish/viriloid performance. The *countertype* has no place in the emotional economy of the terrible community, where in the final analysis only stereotypes prevail; only the Leader, in fact, is *objectively* desirable. All other positions are untenable without the implicit avowal of a fundamental incapacity to exist in a singular sense; but the deviations from the stereotype are ceaselessly fed by the pitiless emotional metabolism of the terrible community. When the countertype, for instance, seeks to be freed from itself, it will be violently pushed back in the solitary confinement chamber of its "insufficiency." The scapegoat-countertype operates as a kind of circus mirror deforming everyone, which reassures them while disturbing them.

Implicitly, one remains in the terrible community because of one's not being either the Leader or the countertype, whereas these latter two remain in it *because they don't have any choice.*

18

Each terrible community has its Leader, and vice-versa.

19

The Leader doesn't need to affirm himself; he can even *play the role* of the countertype or joke ironically about virility. His charisma doesn't need to be of the competitive/high-performance type, because it's objectively attested to by the terrible community's biometric desire parameters, and by the *effective* submission of other men and women. The terrible community is a community of cuckolds.

20

The fundamental sentiment that bonds the terrible community to its Leader isn't one of submission, but of *availability*, that is, a sophisticated variant of obedience. The time of the terrible community's members must permanently be filtered through the screen of availability: sexual availability towards the Leader, physical availability for the greatest variety of tasks, emotional availability to undergo whatever kind of injury from the inevitable distraction of others. In the terrible community, availability is the artistic introjection of discipline.

21

Both the desire of the Leader and the *desire to be* a Leader know themselves to be damned to inevitable defeat. Because the Leader's woman (no one fails to figure out) is the only one that isn't fooled by his seductive masquerading, to the extent that she sees the nothingness behind it every day: the private life of the rulers is always the most miserable of anyone's. In fact, within the terrible community the Leader is desirable like a sophisticated and haughty woman is in biopolitical democracy. The sexual desire that men and women feel towards the Leader, which wraps him in so intense an aura that it brings all gazes to spontaneously turn towards him, is none other than a desire for humiliation. One wants to strip the Leader naked, to see the Leader, without his dignity, really satisfy the solemn procession of the desires he excites — and prevail. Everyone hates the Leader, like men have hated women for millennia. At root, everyone wants to *tame* the Leader, because everyone hates the loyalty given him.
EVERYONE HATES HIS OWN LOVE FOR THE LEADER.

22

The personal, in the terrible community, *isn't* political.

23

The Leader is most often a man, since he acts in the name of the Father.

24

He who *sacrifices himself* acts in the name of the father. The Leader is, in effect, he who perpetuates the sacrificial form of the terrible community with his own sacrifice, and weighs upon others with his demands that they too make sacrifices. But since the Leader is not a Tyrant — while all the same being in every respect highly tyrannical — *he does not openly tell* others what to do; the Leader does not impose his will, he lets it impose itself by secretly guiding the desire of others, which in the final analysis is always simply the desire to please him. To the question, "what should I do?" the Leader will respond "Whatever you want," since he knows that his existence within the terrible community in fact *prevents* others from wanting anything but what he wants.

25

He who acts in the name of the Father cannot be questioned. Where force sets itself up as an argument, discourse withdraws into small talk and idle chatter, or into making excuses. As long as there is a Leader — and his terrible community — there will be no parrhesia, and men, women, and the Leader himself will remain in exile. The Leader's authority cannot enter into the discussion as long as the *facts* prove that people love him while at the same time