

insinuations of the puritan and the unhappy salaciousness of frustrated love.

Initially, I like to believe, intelligence was a hand and a tool for desires, to light the haphazard pursuit of their satisfaction. The paths of sensory shrewdness have been interfered with and effaced by the commercial routes of work and profit. The instinctive and rudimentary practice of the first ages has, along with the tool which sprang from its own creativeness, undergone an accompanying evolution the transformation of men into masters and slaves to match the economic recuperation of instruments invented in the play of desires.

So one sees the family mutilate the impressionable intelligence of the child to set it to work, education and production. Reflect! says the will to power's mirror to the child. Be reasonable! teaches economic reason. Where's your head? fusses the intellect as it takes control of the body. Sensual lucidity, which grows out of the awakening of the first desires, is torn from global sexuality and passes into the service of universal exchange, where it becomes intellectuality repressing, directing and inverting the impulses of life.

What you call intelligence, a measurable and testable product judged by its yield, I can only perceive as passion repressed, brought to heel and made to produce. The intelligence born of the self-satisfaction of desire, cares not a hoot for that kind. If it is true that everyone is as stupid as what he represses — for there is no other sort of stupidity — then intellectuality is really and truly stupidity committed by a sensitive, sensual, sensory intelligence.

*Putting intense pleasure first prepares for the end of separate thought.* The intellectual function works, while the intelligence of desire creates. All the lucidity I wish for is born of the quest for pleasure, in refining the thorn into the rose, in gardening sexual luxuriance into an order of satisfactions beyond number. I care nothing for books and learned dissertation, the art and ornament of the spirit. What do knowledge, curiosity, science,

## The Book Of Pleasures

Raoul Vaneigem

8 January 1979.

### **3. History on the point of reversing passes through a reversal in the individual's life.**

*The function of the intellect is to detach intelligence from the desires of life and turn it against them.* Behind all your speeches and arm-waving life laughs at your efforts. While your voice perorates punctuated by your muscles for effect, your repressed desires take their revenge like an audience suddenly aware of being duped by the speaker. Your face turns red in parody of an erection while your fingers fiddling with your ring are saying that a brief hug is better than a long discussion, legs cross and uncross to approve what your fingers suggest, while the stomach blends ironic gurgling with the will to power's slanging matches. In the speaker, listen for the distant echo which declares against him.

The world of appearances is neurotic theatre. Affectation and mannerisms, muscular spasms, a jutting lip, the military stare, hard features and a studied voice, are so many doors slammed on life's desires, so many running nooses slipped tight round pleasure, and so many mad outbursts to come contained in humble bowing and scraping, flabbiness, listlessness and the frenetic urge to destroy oneself. You might think one moment of true happiness enough to blow this insubstantial haze away.

We have pressed so far into despair that there is nothing left in front of us but the climb back to life. Do you not feel that, increasingly, pleasure is shaking free from being dictated to by money or the head? It is ages since sexuality winked at you out of a pun, the fantasies contained in a look, in resonances or homophonies. Counting-rhymes and landscapes, indescribable signs and messages are the threaded pearls of eroticism repressed. There is nothing which does not pair and embrace; but on the screen of repression you only get to see the licentious

ual invests in monstrous inversion, has, in spite of the variety of intonation, gesture and expression, only one meaning: the initial castration.

Confronted with language which abstracts each person from himself, hangs him by the head, compares, measures and exchanges him at the whim of syntax in power, it is about time that everyone pulled the wool from what lies before and beyond their misery — the will to live — which speaks no recognised language. We are going to harry the intellectual function till it has not a leg to stand on, strip it of its self-critical stance which is its alibi, and bring it to its knees at the door of what is beyond words, so it can cry out only “Who’s there?” That cry will encompass its destruction.

If you really want to love yourself in a world which loves you, your intellectual existence will slowly disappear; you will no longer occupy a place in the language structure because, in enjoying yourself you will cease to *work*. Someone who is jealous, authoritarian and grasping is quite capable of reasoning with himself and showing himself everything about his attitude which stinks. For all that, he is not going to change; on the contrary, he will stick all the harder to what he is, but this time accompanied by masochistic twinges of bad conscience and sadistic deceit and lies. Through self-analysis he may discover the pleasures of life inverted under this mixture of anxiety and pleasurable delight, and find himself all of a sudden about to reverse his perspective. At this point self-destruction via the intellectual function stops, and here too stops the *Book of Pleasures*. Here it is up to each of us either to fulfil his prophetic ability and die of it or to give over to his desires and impulses the energy he habitually uses to persecute them. It is up to him to allow himself to be destroyed by his intellectual function, or to dissolve it in utter relaxation in pleasure.

The final use of intellectuality is to point to what it cannot grasp, which is the life it tightens round which nonetheless destroys it.

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The ferocity which springs from suppressing your desires finds vent in back-biting, polemic, pin-pricks and bludgeonings which exist for no other reason than the economy's debilitation of humanity. Language is so steeped in this fatality that essentially it paralyses any fundamental questioning of the business system.

The more you allow the language of the will to power to lock up the life impulse in rigid chest muscles, the more you find yourself overwhelmed by each rush of negative emotion, and the more you are subject to wear and tear in the exchange of contempt you experience at every encounter. When you talk about a film or a friend, an adventure, an enemy, some minor occurrence, you are simply making appreciative or deprecatory statements born of what you yourself have renounced. They serve more or less inefficiently to caulk your leaking ship against frustration with conceit and gangrenous compensations. What good does it do to berate politicians for their worm-eaten virtue or journalists for lying through their teeth or radicals for becoming stars in the spectacle of revolution? If you go armed with their language against them, you will in fact rally them, and you will be wed for better or worse in a common castration of desire.

If I were to speak for others and let them speak for me, I would lose my life to the extent that I profited the language which makes me other, and drop the thread of my desires for the knot of their inversion which cannot be unravelled.

To beguile childhood, educational precepts intone the litany of gloom and terror. The accounts of death, disease, accident, disaster and everyday misery set the tone which the cry to revolt and the invitations to give up trying, as well as guilt and ways to rid oneself of guilt, simply modulate. The language of the family terrorises the whole of life. This emotional plague, which warbles so heartrendingly or so glacially ironic, which haunts our speech and our meals, our quarrels, ruptures and reconciliations, all this language of the head wherein the sex-

tencing. You must not get people wrong! Speak your whole mind! And look sharp about it! The age of candour and transparency will make us wish we still had the old forked tongue, the hypocrisy of puritan and revolutionary bureaucrat. Then the separation was evident, whereas now intellectual unity recasts the unity of life as perfect abstraction. The tyranny of words to correspond to each event is worse than the tyranny of silence, for life has nothing in common with the language imposed on it.

Whether it sanctions the dominant world or not, language reduced to intellectuality is simply work, and rejection of it work also. However radical it would like itself to be, it does not dissociate from the business incrustation which is destroying us. At worst, intellectuality conceals how it functions repressively, at best, it hems in that which there are no words for; either way, it betrays the intense pleasure which carries within itself the end of intellectuality.

The language used here does not hide that fundamentally it is discredited. The criticism it turns on itself does not escape business processes — and knows it. It also does not intend to destroy itself in its own movement. Where it necessarily must halt, on the threshold of life, is where it expects its destruction at the hands of life to come; it is through everyone's sensual exuberance, by the personal actualisation of desires, that it hopes to be annihilated. It is our only chance to have done with the words and signs which govern both our bodies and society.

When unity of feeling gets the better of separated thought, nothing more will be named that will not destroy its name.

*Intellectuality speaks the language of castration.* Just listen to most conversations. They are only prompts or leading questions, police statements, accusations by the prosecution, or the defence lawyer's panegyrics. In verbal cat-fights between prestige and interest you can have the last word but you cannot conceal that you are living your last life.

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which the priests translated to their clients. In the same way, sorceresses danced naked under the moon, mouth of the sky, until they fell into orgasmic trance and prophesied. Later, in their infinite condescension, men credited women with a quality which they flattered themselves they had lost: intuition, a mysterious ear which picks up the occult vibration of things, communications which the economic criteria of language evidently consider under-developed.

Women have long shared with artists, children and madmen the privilege of shrieking, singing, weeping, throwing their arms about, offering any old thing in gift, and betraying what is usually kept quiet. Since industrialisation won them the priceless right to work in a factory, gain a wage, run a business and command an airborne division — while artists became civil servants and promoted culture — only children and the so-called mentally ill are left to give confused expression to the convolutions of language prised from the grip of trade.

Intellectuality manages to filter language through economics. From the language of our daily lives through the postures crabbed by emotional plague, expression and communication have become work, a constrained form of existence, an abstract version of life. The critical and negating aspect of the intellectual function has denounced the lie inherent in the ruling language so thoroughly that this truth is now imposed on us. But is not truth obtained by intellectuality the spontaneous confession of business self-destruction?

What is intellectual truth worth when it dissimulates its fundamental nature as untruth, as work, separation and castration? It is simply the blood staining the world upside-down with its desire for death.

Speech which 'kept its own counsel' through silence and duplicity has been modernised into speech as confession. The unconscious is revealed, but only to profit fresh oppression; gestures interpreted and commented upon form the substance of fresh indictments. Each one is now readable for ease of sen-

bureaucracy's wheels when such a rejection does not come directly from each person's will to live.

*The dominant language is economic deduction applied to the language of the body.* The economy has produced its language by producing the work without which it could not exist and on which society has gradually modelled itself. The transformation of life into productive force necessarily expresses itself according to the abstract forms which drain us of our humanity. All official communication is based on the inversion of desires, which perpetuates our alienation at its root.

There is, however, an infra-language which the economy tries to recuperate, in line with its need to conquer those areas of life it still does not control. Around the black holes of current language, power's pronouncements dance wildly. What they cannot define, grasp and name, they still try to score off and tolerantly dismiss as "gratuitous", absurd or clumsily expressed, as exceptional, legendary, other-worldly or incongruous.

Old patriarchal power first identified the abyss from which dangerous sexual impulses rise with woman's mouth. For a woman intense pleasure is still a song and a hymn to Pan, which is retained in music and poetry only as a dim memory.

The sap of sensual language, the language of the body, grows thinner the longer history continues. Initially woman is the evil box in which power strives to lock the elusive.

Do not stories, literature, religions characterise her as the one who talks too much and says *nothing*? She does not *exchange* words, she bandies them wantonly. Gossip and chatterbox, faithlessly repeating confidences, she symbolises the dark side of humanity, deaf to reason's arguments, rejecting economy of language through which the economy is expressed. Untamed language which ancient rituals excelled at recuperating and making sacred: out of the mouth of the pythoness seated upon her tripod, her sex open above the sulphurous fumes rising from a fissure in the floor, came words and ejaculatory cries

## Preface. STARTING FROM SCRATCH

The long dark night of trade is all the illumination our inhuman history has ever known. It will lift as life dawns. Death stares at our passions and we mute them; we mesh our desires with what is inimical to life; and we base the greater part of our existence on the bloody search for profit and power. We have been doing it for centuries and we have had enough. We have had enough of revolutions dyed in blood by intellectuals. Violence too is changing sides.

Survival, going cheap these days in what is left of the exchange market, is the everyday production of misery, a totalitarian industry. It too is in what you call crisis, in fact the death spasm of this whole civilisation.

The only human thing this society based on commerce has made is the mould cast in parody of itself, which serves to propagate it world-wide. The fragmentation that exchange value imposes on life can only tolerate fragmented people, embryos shrivelling in society's incubators, creatures never to be masters of themselves, but slaves. Once cloaked in divinity, then fleshed in ideology, power is now revealed in its bare bones: Economics. If this carries all the bets, the game from now on must go against us.

Is it true that life makes sense because of death? Or that we have energy in order to work? That sooner or later judgement is passed on everything either by gods or men or history? That everyone has to pay in the end? For one reason or another, or even for no reason? Or is it maybe that existence is precious because nobody exists except behind "I must work" identities? All in all, do authority and money really regulate how lovers kiss or the taste for wine, or your dreams, or the smell of thyme on a mountainside, since they govern what they cost? If it is and they do, then the world is upside down, and I want to set it right.

Daylight has not yet dawned on real life. But behind all you shadowy figures, it is pushing through, under my very feet. We are all so sick of the whole shebang that we want to give up dying whilst gesticulating like the living. In the pit of despair the road stops...or climbs. Am I the only one to oppose your society-in which desire turns to rape and the will to live becomes deadly? For me, joy cannot be sold, desire cannot be priced, and I do things because I feel like it, unconstrained by the laws of "scratch-my-back". Even the discouragement and lack of confidence drummed in since childhood have lost their power to persuade me otherwise.

And do not kid yourselves that the triumph of commerce can conceal its appalling effects on humanity. For you cannot resist the historical fact of life by processing it simply into profit and loss. Collectively, our will to live will smash the supremacy of senile economics.

Everyone is so bored with the pleasures of survival-pleasures of a world upside-down — that we have to open up and free life's pleasures, that they may spill out everywhere. If we give them free rein we demolish the current dominant ethic, but it will not be destroyed till we let desire rip. Revolution no longer lies in refusing to acquiesce and survive but in taking a delight in oneself that everyone conspires to prohibit, particularly the militants... Yet the weapon we can all use to fight the proletarianisation of body and feeling is pleasure unstinted and unopposed.

Most people have lived in opposition to the flow of life. Yet it is becoming obvious that this perspective is now being reversed and the architects of topsy-turvy confounded. It announces the end of the economic era and introduces universal self-management. You can hear it in people's heartbeats, it is at the heart of present historical conditions: freedom at last to enjoy so many pleasures. It sabotages the shopkeeper's mentality which paralyses the muscles and grates the nerves and stifles desire in the name of work and duty, compulsion,

one's erudition, or science or reasoning ability or intelligence. It does not draw a line between, on the one hand, thinkers, artists, ideologues, critics, organisers, bureaucrats and leaders, and workers, labourers, boxers, illiterates, peasants, butchers, ruffians and servicemen, on the other. It is present in each of them since it expresses how *the economy is anchored* in the individual, in the same way as culture, in the broad sense, imposes it on society.

The intellectual function is part and parcel with the mechanics of repression and finding the means to unwind. It bears the unmistakable mark of the trap, of getting stuck, of emotional plague, of the transition to stone. It sees intense pleasure only from the reverse angle of inability in enjoyment, impotence, it considers pleasure's job as simply to be attractive and mask the absence of life.

The intellectual is proletarianised by the cerebral inflation of business, by work producing thought separated from life. He manages to comprehend people and things by forcing them through hoppers and milling them; comprehension in the dominant world is part of the commodity which negates and reinforces itself.

He grasps nothing except through necessity or constraint or outside reason; because it is true, because he has to, or because the dogma has descended from the heaven of ideas which he has so much respect for and which he curses.

To base oneself on the intellective function is necessarily to be out of step with one's desires; it represses the will to live so as to benefit the will to power of which it is the inverted version.

Because it does the heavy work the proletariat is better equipped to finish with intellectuality than is the ruling class which organises and imposes it. The proletarians have thus acquired the preferential right unanimously to reject leaders. But the managerial principle re-emerges and greases



sically immobile world dominated by the economy, and rarely escapes. This is equilibrium in terror, where each part arrogates the right of insurrection and repression for itself.

Sometimes the body does give vent to its feelings, does insist on its leisure, its liberties, its carnival, a riot. But what good is that, since it remains likely to grow rigid again, repress its desires, and filter off the energy to profit work?

The head, too, takes liberties, and knows as much about plunging into extravagance, getting lost, raving and identifying with the body as any earnest intellectual populist. What never disappears is separation.

Whether it watches over the apocalyptic beast slumbering inside us or liberates it in an orgy of blood and debauch, the intellectual function only reproduces the evolution of the commodity destroying itself as it destroys life.

Those whom power has sent neurotic will only suffer the neurotics in power to govern them. The more we spit out the medicines the hard school and the kind-hearted alike make us swallow, the more the means of getting us to ingest them are perfected. Yearning for intense pleasure may become generally acceptable as psychosomatic ideology spreads. It professes that “the organic and the psychic constitute a unity whose two factors cannot be dissociated”, but only the better to overlook the origin of that separation and the means of combatting it.

In the same way the cult of feeling is growing as feeling itself is gradually reduced to abstraction, to *mental* image. While life hollows itself and becomes an empty shell, sensualism flourishes on its tomb to which little men avid for money come to smell the fruit ripening and the new-mown hay. The more people confine intense pleasure to their heads, the more they talk about sex.

*Emancipation issuing from the head carries its rottenness with it.* I term an intellectual not the person who uses his head more than his hands but one who *works* to repress his desires for life. Intellectuality is not measured by how much one knows or by

exchange, guilt, intellectual control and the will to power. By reversing my perspective, I can distinguish between sound reasoning which ends up killing me, from my desire to live, reasoned or not. Refusing to survive is replaced by affirmation: nothing can satisfy my appetite except more life.

People grow so used to fear, to murder, to contempt and hate that they become deaf to whatever in them whispers that maybe they are wrong and their attitude simply reflects what they loathe in their own lives. That is why they prefer drugs to suppress their despair — the illusion of instant cure keeps them going. But the canker which devours them remains.

Freedom has no worse enemy than these cure-all panaceas which claim to transform society. For these veils of exorcist ritual simply serve to smuggle the old world back in. Lawyers for the revolution or sniffers of radical chic, whatever pedigrees these grocers have, they are our adversaries, armour-clad in neurosis, and will bear the full brunt of the violence of those who live without restraint.

I know well the wise men who denigrate survival, having in many ways been one of them. Under the cassock of that high-brow criticism moves the secular arm of far more pemicious inquisitions. But they merely project the disgust they feel at themselves towards others.

Since the system spreads by destroying its producers and thus by destroying itself, the problem is how to avoid becoming an accessory to trade. Those who whimper in pain, unable to relax enough to enjoy themselves, give up extricating their desires out of the mercantile stranglehold, and make money because they cannot make anything else. Such potential suicides are notable for the way they slag the Establishment; but however convinced they seem, they remain its lackeys to be dug back into the social midden. They have grown quite used to suffering because things don't change, and have also grown to respect their neighbours' wish to leave things as they are. You

cannot tell apart their funeral dirge from the old world's De Profundis.

"Love and friendship are just illusions," they whine, snivelling senilities of the recluse. No doubt that is why we pay them so much attention, these ossified landowners and disillusioned civil servants. Decay ennobles.

Toilers for order, toilers for chaos, for inhibition or psychic lib., the auto-destructive process of trade programmes the curriculum vitae of inexistence. Death grabs and you stumble from life, worn out with keeping the books and balance-sheets of daily misery, or with strutting your stuff like a ham politician because of the wonderful way you are managing to die.

Though you loathe power you revere it nonetheless, for from it you have borrowed that arrogant attitude of rejection which endorses all your contemptible acts. But life mocks those even with the most wonderful theories. Only from pleasures is born audacity and laughter, which rings out at orders and laws and limits; it will fall upon all who still judge, repress, calculate and govern, with the innocence of a child.

While intellectuals devise ingenious methods of slipping through the keyhole, those with a world of desires to achieve are breaking down the door, an act of particularly gross behaviour for those fastidious mechanics in social engineering who think they see light at the end of the tunnel. But it is life itself seeking fulfilment. The increasing abstraction of the commercial process has turned our heads into the last place left to hide; but even there all that remains is the shadow of power in a tower of skulls. The scars of age, source of so much nostalgic reminiscence, are the wounds of self-renunciation, pleasure mutilated and bled to death by a mania for appearances, a need to dominate, and the will to power.

Your truths have little but the bitterness which has sown them, their edge honed on generations who learned to accept things only if accompanied by kicks, cuffs and mortification. But all arguments cut both ways and set up their own repres-

To judge by the cult of severed heads, priests and chiefs from the outset seem actually to have lived this bodily split. I do not know what natural death is, but the death we know begins its existence with economic castration in the cradle of hierarchical power.

It has long been the custom to behead the condemned of the ruling class, while guilty people from the lower classes — those libidinous deeps which constitute the 'working body' of the State — are publicly yanked by the neck and jolted about until emptied by reverse orgasm of the shameful matter which composes them: sperm, urine, excrement. White-coated torturers-psychiatrists, educators, the men who place the electrodes — still take part in these grotesque ceremonies. The increasing abstraction which is directing our lives shows more subtlety in getting hold of us to empty us of our humanity. With its absurd 'animal' outbursts and crises neurotic reason has marked our era as the humanist gulag and one which has most wrenched our body to pieces.

*The cervical system is modelled on the commodity system.* It translates into power mechanisms the abstract organisation which is the economy, and is the catalyst for the exchange reaction in which life transforms itself into work. The head is the place where the body becomes a stranger.

The more the need to control is openly identified with particular work, the more the head is spokesman for the State, speaking even for those areas of life it does not control.

Society is reduced to a market in which pleasures become work, and that work intellectualised, and the muscular shell repressing sexual impulses keeps the head above the melée, conferring on it the job of maintaining order. In such a world how can normality avoid being permeated by the whole range of neuroses?

Between the head which controls, governs, organises, and the rest of the body which carries out orders and blocks desires welling up, 'class struggle' is pinned threshing in the ba-

ism has had its day. It deals us much worse blows by encouraging each of us to abstract himself and in this way concretely to achieve business's self-destructive plans. It turns emancipation into a weak discharge squeezed out in a pitiable form of repression.

However, if the ruling class's essential weapon is the intellect, it reaches the proletariat (the class whose power is not recognised), as a foreign intrusion: the mind which governs the manual labour by which proletarians initially define themselves. It is only when the proletariat tries to get hold of power instead of trying to destroy it that it sheds its skin and finds the abstract consciousness of class, the interpretation of which belongs to bureaucrats, the quartermasters of proletarian revolution.

But even as emancipation turns its back on itself by working its way through the intellect, the involuntary reaction of a person's will to live against his growing proletarianisation puts a radically different weapon in the hands of each of us, to rid ourselves of all activities keeping us from intense pleasure.

## **2. The world upside down reaches its possible turning-point when proletarianisation through the intellectual reflex leads only to death or to sensual intelligence.**

*Intellectuality grows at the expense of the will to live.* Because the division of work is reproduced in the division of the body, separation between masters and slaves has made our heads into the receptacle of separate thought. The appearance of an intellectual class and a manual class has situated the power which controls and represses sexuality in the rest of the body.

sion. What is knowledge worth when it is founded on the tacit postulate that oneself is one's own worst enemy?

An influential person quickly discovers that though he controls others he has no real existence for them. Should he hope to safeguard this phantom self "for the good of his fellow-men", he loses and deceives himself as well as his public. That is why I do not intend to try to convince you: I do not care to add scorn to whatever contempt you already have for others. However rapt your attention to the various messengers of self-destruction, whom I am sure will repay your attention with interest, I prefer, rather offhandedly, to wait until sooner or later you grow deaf to everything that does not increase your pleasure.

It is much more the lack of fun which batters us than overabundance and indulgence. Let the dead bury the living dead. My well-being does not dine upon virtue and certainly not upon revolutionary virtue. I feast upon what is alive and kicking. Dead truths are venomous, as all who give up their desires discover.

What's a book worth which does not say more than all the others? What returns each man to himself is written with the taste of plenty, not under the scourge of directives. The *'Book of Pleasures'* is bound to be tainted with the life of intellectualism, separate thought which rules over the body and oppresses it. But the lie that we each carry can be dissolved only by doing exactly what we want to do, without qualm or hesitation. May your desires wipe out whatever lies remain here, and efface the grand inquisitor from your brain.

In all beings, in all things, in all creation, I take what pleases and leave the rest. Keep away, serious critics! This is not for you. Why should you put up with me if you cannot stand yourselves? I don't give a toss what you think of this book; so what you do with it is up to you. I have nothing to exchange. If you know all this and better, go to it!

Whoever learns to love himself is beyond the plots and spells of shame and guilt and the fear of loving; and knows too, that despite my errors I do not veer an inch from my desire to create a society based upon the individual will to live, by globally subverting the society which has stood everything on its head.

What could I wish for the present but to take the greatest pleasure in being what I am? To enjoy myself in such a way that never again do I get bogged down in other people's misery. If these righteous citizens knew what dynamite they humped about every step of the way... Humility's tatters and megalomania's trumpery have between them successfully persuaded the sober how insignificant they are; look at them, they are so graceless, and their eyes are dead to what's left of life beyond affective blocks and compensatory binges. Who will shatter the rock that for millenia has sat upon individual autonomy? For so long now learning to live has meant learning to die.

"When I come to make a wheel," said the wheelright. "I can't go at it slowly, or it will turn out weak and uncertain. Whereas if I go hard at it, it'll be firm but grossly proportioned. But if I take it steadily, at my own speed and so that it feels right, it will turn out just as I wish. You can't explain the feel for it in words." The words here begin where my lived experience falls silent. If you take these words so they 'feel right', I get a chance to mesh with every person's experience and go forward with it. Only the individual will to live can make the *Book of Pleasures* what it is to me, an urge to have fun that nothing and no-one outside myself has imposed on me.

I like the Viennese humourist's quip: "There are a lot of people who'd love to hit me, and many who'd like to chat with me for an hour. They are generally the same people." Cut me or lionise me, it's a joke either way! But I can't shield myself from the feeling that whoever represses himself, refusing his own desires and turning towards death, adds a shackle to my emancipation I could well do without .

sive of repressions — the one practised in the name of emancipation.

If you bet that the spread of intellectuality will accelerate the seizure of consciousness by the masses, in fact you are proposing that the proletariat, traditionally condemned to manual labour, better its situation by turning to intellectual work. So there you are in all ignorance churning out the prose of automation, cybernetics, spectacle and self-managed alienation.

The worst form of intellectualism is the one which denies itself, taking the body's part against the head, setting the dark and obscurantist forces of the self against the clarity of reason, preferring manual to intellectual activity as though they were not two states of the same work dictatorship. Those who expect proletarian muscle to confirm the exactness of their rational thought are like those who think two stripes make a soldier. Their scorn for the intellectual cynically exorcises the utter disregard in which they hold themselves. In the best Stalinist and fascist tradition, they are sacrificing to the twin-faced cult of manual and intellectual work, a horned god slipping through into radical shrewdness as theory and practice.

The intellectual party keeps growing among the proletariat, and constitutes the bureaucracy's reserve army. This way the spiritual rabble advantageously replaces the riff-raff in clerical raiment. They too have their orthodoxies and heresies, excommunications and ecumenicism. Alternately handing out praise and abuse in the worst student rhetorical manner when set upon nit-picking critiques, these thinkers with a touch of the proletarian tar-brush put revolutionary theory out to graze, on the balding common of business. It is a vain attempt to conceal that the intellectual function is at work in each of us and that it proletarianises us by shoving the progressive corner or trade, otherwise in decay, deeper into our heads.

To accept the intellectual function as the sole form of intelligence is to work at repressing life's desires, and to repress ourselves. The illusion born of blows intellect has dealt capital-

right to govern, a victory for mind over matter, intellect over manual labour. It's managerial function is of divine origin no longer, but it likes to think of itself as the thinking part of 'nature'. As, increasingly, cybernetic power absorbs manual labour (the way industry absorbed craftsmanship), it becomes clearer that work considered as a whole takes the form of intellectual work.

The intellectual function is a weapon from the master's armoury. In gaining possession of it, the slave is captured by it. It's liberating reason in turn enslaves, justifying all the State's criminal creations: gods, hierarchy, religion and the state of mind proper to it, and everything which guarantees servility.

But the insurrectional myths of Prometheus and Lucifer also stem from the intellect. It seizes opportunities to ridicule the gods, working to bankrupt the sacred and sap the power of nobles, employers and office mandarins. All uprisings spring from it; it has answered every call for liberty. In the order of things, which is the definition of power's perspective, intelligence surely merits its reputation for being at once the greatest and most fallible element.

Nevertheless, it sheds all ambiguity the moment its participation in the contradictory development of trade is revealed. Equally religious and anti-religious in agrarian societies, it turns ideological and counter-ideological when the tangible abstraction of money and power reaches into all human activities. It has never ceased both to attack and consolidate the commercial system, whose movement of self-destruction and reinforcement it embraces.

In short, the bureaucratic and bourgeois class gains as much from repressing subversive ideas as from tolerating them as long as they remain separate from people's will to live. For 'revolutionary' thought serves as an escape vent for the oppressive state which thought-in-power sustains. Further, in its capacity as intellectual work, it can develop the most astute and progres-

The key is within each of us. No instructions come with it. When you decide to treat yourself as your only point of reference you will cease to be trapped by name-dropping — yours or mine — or by deferring to other people's opinions, or by the particular way they see things. And you will cease to link yourself to the people whose everpresent memories of having taken part in a movement in history still prevent them from deriving any personal benefit from the experience.

It is entirely up to us to invent our own lives. We waste so much energy in living vicariously, it is really hard work, when it would be enough, if you love yourself, to apply this energy to the achievement and development of the incomplete being, the child within. I wish to reach the anonymity of desire and be carried away on the flood.

In endlessly denaturing what still seemed natural, the history of trade has reached a point where either we perish with it or recreate nature and humanity completely afresh. Beyond the inversion in which death battens on life, life leaps up, and swiftly sketches society where pleasure comes of its own accord.

At any one moment, my 'me' is to be found tightly tangled in the detritus of what oppresses me; heated debate erupts in the attempt to disentangle the twisted filaments and liberate utterly the sexual impulse as the breath that gives life perpetually. It ought never to be stifled. That's why enjoying yourself also presages the end of work and holding back, exchange, intellectuality, guilt, and the will to power. I see no justification — except economic — for suffering, separation, orders, payments, reproaches or power. My struggle for autonomy is that of the proletarian against his growing proletarianisation, of the individual against the omnipresent dictatorship of goods for sale, the commodity. Life erupting has kicked a breach in your death-oriented civilisation.

Will you now accuse me of being overly subjective? Probably you will; but take care, because one day your own objec-

tivity may tap you on the shoulder and remind you of the life which you are most lamentably losing. Over your realism my naivety has one incomparable advantage: it is brimming over with most amusing monsters, in contrast to what you call planning and foresight which accustoms you to live with a distrust for pleasure which reaches back thousands of years.

Individuals are being born again and I am glad, glad as at spring burgeoning again in the earth. Were I alone in feeling it, the entertaining folly of having desired to conquer death by liberating all desires from it would remain.

which is, in effect, the part of life it annexes, controls and governs.

Those we see as citizens, cogwheels of State, happily describe bureaucracy as an absurd excrescence, like a hernia which is curable if treated the right way, or as an utterly ridiculous means to avoid having to organise things better. It is, moreover, what the State has achieved through thought separated from life, nothing else. That is what thought separated from life is: the product of work which each of us feels compelled to produce for society at the expense of his own life.

Now that trade has ceased to spread principally through wars and colonisation it consolidates its conquest of the provinces of life with the diligence acquired in its exploitative phase. The more its organisational needs take shape, the more its abstraction becomes tangible.

While consumable products are progressively humanised we are all free to think as we like. But simultaneously what is human is being increasingly consumerised by trade, and that only gives us the freedom to act according to thought divorced from living. The business of thought is to promote business. That's what our freedom's founded on!

By drawing the strength to work from our own lives, a process which gradually does more and more damage, we each end up drained of life, our body lost, no more than an image unreeled on a screen of dead thought in a fantasy movie where real life forms and features are merely 'on loan'. There are still many of us who would fight for the franchise for images.

Intellectualised freedom is just a new mincer in the regimentation sausage machine. Commodity totalitarianism propagates parthenogenetically, through the head.

*The intellectual party is bureaucracy's reserve army.* Since privilege was the pretext for not working, the basis for aristocratic authority was, ultimately, intellectual alone. By comparison, the bourgeoisie see in their — dearly *bought* —

## **Chapter 3. INTENSE PLEASURE CAUSES BOTH INTELLECT AND THE STATE TO CEASE FUNCTIONING.**

### **1. Commerce captures the intellect in its final expansive phase.**

*The route intellectuality has taken expressed the economy's priority concern with organisation.* In the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries commercial imperialism was based on two main preoccupations: technical development and the conquest of markets. When State capitalism appeared, an *omnipresent* economic organisation was needed.

Commerce invests its power in the administration of resources where it is likely to produce or spend itself within a closed circle. It has to grow into the shape demanded by its blueprint of itself, and, as executioner of its own judgement, organises and administers its own death as well as the death of the societies which produce it.

Bureaucracy is the concrete form this abstraction takes; it drains people's individuality and treats them as the shadows behind consumer goods. The State maintains itself through its bureaucracy and considers itself in terms of bureaucracy,

## **Chapter 1. INTENSE PLEASURE IMPLIES THE END OF ALL FORMS OF WORK AND OF ALL RESTRAINT**

### **1. The world of the commodity is a world upside-down, which bases itself not upon life but upon the transformation of life into work.**

*The factory has invaded the territory of everyday life.* For years the privileged zone of alienation, factory walls simultaneously bounded the proletariat's prisons and the bourgeoisie's liberties. Those who escaped at nightfall briefly revived in the merrymaking of love and alcohol that vitality which labour's daily constraints had failed to break. Ten hours a day of noise, exhaustion and humiliation were unable entirely to wear them out. It was society's sinister curse which forced them to match their energies to the rhythms and wear and tear of machines. But the employers' profit-seeking and foetid nets of exploitation did not poison their fundamental welling of desire, their sexual exuberance in life itself and for themselves.

The economic crisis still experienced as specifically economic encouraged the proletariat to acquire the means to

accede to the pleasures the bourgeoisie had previously reserved for itself. The constant threat of hunger made them overlook the fact that life bought with wealth and power was fundamentally life reduced to economics. The right to pleasure thus appeared as a conquest, although pleasure had just been taken over as an object of trade.

*Illicit pleasures are banned until they become profitable.* Capitalism's need to expand has transformed the world into one gigantic market in which every one of life's myriad manifestations is reduced to just another sales pitch. In so doing, capitalism grows but digs its own grave by killing off the producers who make the expansion possible .

We all know in what contempt the aristocracy held the work which guaranteed its survival. Where feudalism cared only to see theomorphic shit the bourgeoisie has erected its nutrition centre out of the basic substance of economics, and the bourgeoisie has forcibly exposed the true excrement in both religion and economics.

The bourgeoisie redeem work, thanks to which they seize power, but the right they arrogate to themselves, to rank manual below intellectual work, profitably repeats the hierarchical ritual. Knowledge establishes a new temple of power. Pleasures which over-stepped the limits had previously been expiated with penances, masses and mortification: the bourgeoisie are the first to propose redemption through work. Sin is cheerfully desacralised, given a cash value, and identified with a right to profit.

The crime of idleness is absolved when it acts as a stimulus to consume. This ancient antidote to work is here seen transformed back into work what could be more efficient in getting the workers back to the bench than improving access to the factories of "choose your-own-consumer-goods"?

Making pleasure democratically accessible coincides — though it is scarcely coincidence — with the conquest of new markets where simple enjoyment is called comfort and

tives trying out universal self-management from 1936 onwards, and the instances of refusing to pay which fresh innocence is multiplying everywhere. I also would gouge in bureaucracy's victories, and areas infested by the ruling class, spots where police and bankers like to nest, and places flattened by rapidly increasing proletarianisation. The map would reveal how giving freely and intense pleasure develop around a person's needs, and, in spite of the deadly shadows cast by profit and power, what a unique effect these two elements have on his life.

Setting fire to commissariats and barracks, prisons, tax-offices, banks, money and factories brings me less pleasure than the change in understanding profiled by these acts, namely breaking what prevents us enjoying everything, and tolerating no check on pleasure. Sudden outbursts of destructiveness have had their day. they now simply reflect homage to this death-ridden society by would-be suicides, or alms that the old dowager of leftist good works gives to the poor of her parish.

Giving as universal practice is central to setting intense pleasure free and will cause business civilization to perish. Red dawns I find less significant than the spark of life which sets them blazing.



And if death should intervene? It is not important, I do not want to know.

#### **4. Free action by individuals is waiting for the chance to clear the way for universal free activity.**

*You do not pay for happiness; you tear it from the society selling it.* In the midst of the sweetest pleasures we are still so conditioned to expect the handle flying back, the next ratchet where misfortune's wheel gets stuck, the next bill to pay, that the adventure already includes the unhappy ending to all acts of subversion. However, the spirit of defeat and despair is chewing its own tail today, like every other vicious circle in trade. The passion for destruction has ceased to be creative, and is no more than a substitute for it.

The industrial societies have led us into the depths of despair; free activity, gratuitousness, leads us on out. When cashiers on strike cause customers to drop their roles and help them take and give away the goods freely, when workers start distributing the stockpile, when people stop paying for rent, electricity bills, and transport, when looting ceases merely to be sudden, sporadic and irrational and plays in the joyful distribution of abundance, it is clear that proletarianisation demands to be rooted out and liquidated.

But then the free fall into gratuity is part of working-class tradition. If I were to draw a geographical and temporal map of the will to live as it directly concerns how our society and my life are evolving, I would, alongside the traps set for me, underline the moments of lived intensity as places sheltered from the radiation of commerce, places where I have succeeded in annihilating the economic hydra during moments of pleasure. I would ink in the towns of Prat Llobregat that were burning money one morning in 1932, the Catalan and Aragonese collec-

happiness possession. In so doing, however, the bourgeoisie crystallise the inexpiable sin: refusal to pay. So enjoyment outside a transaction is the absolute economic crime.

*Our apparent freedom to do whatever we like shows how whatever we choose serves the economy.* Just as bread earned by work tastes acidly of sweat and wages, marketable pleasures are more tedious than the boredom it costs to produce them. The survival pleasures swindle is part of the lie of abstract freedom. The history we lead with every turn of the wheel is not the history of our desires but rather of a lifeless civilization which is about to bury us under its dead weight.

For pleasure has only ever existed by default. To begin with it was shoved into the decent obscurity of night, into the cupboard, into your dreams, the inner world which is not abroad in the light of day, which is the measured light of work-time. But production quotas have ended up subjecting the secret world of desire to the scanners of their self-seeking science and, since it is impossible to abolish desire, economic necessity is instructed to obtain maximum profitable usage. The transformation, by constraint and work, of actions and behaviour which have long remained outside the immediate orbit of the economy, shows clearly enough that the mercantile process evolves only by appropriating life, and uncovering only what it can exploit. Nothing will escape its voracious appetite if humanity becomes increasingly strange to itself.

We are stricken with survival sickness in a world totally upside down. Man is the only creature capable of realising his desires by changing the world. Yet, until now, all he has realized has been the exchange of his life-force for the production and accumulation of goods. For thousands of years the system governing history has operated on the social need to transform our sexual potential into the energy for work. For as long as there have been kings and priests, in a process as invariable as the inequalities between classes and as progressive as the

history of trade, power and economy, like a pair of vampires, have sucked fresh blood to warm their frozen veins.

If we are to believe what we're told, the pressure of a hostile natural environment inexorably pushed a fledgling humanity towards exchange, division of labour, class society and mercantile civilization. What a pretty kettle of fish! As far as we are concerned that road stops here, where the killing joke pointing the irony is that amidst all this wealth that could feed every desire for life passion is utterly absent.

In a world where the only thing forbidden is the autarkic act, all is permitted except absolute pleasure. Religion viewed all pleasure as sin, so in the heaven of trade, it was translated into the castrating aspect of the need to produce. But profits were such that pleasures managed to emancipate themselves from sin: they redeem themselves by paying up, and their apparent liberty simply reveals the economy's growing influence as it develops its true terrestrial potential. Just like salaried workers, pleasures cost the life of a proletarian.

There will be no proletarian emancipation unless we strike the shackles off pleasure.

*The economic animal rules by punishing its sexual nature.* That is what legends of gods being castrated are all about: Osiris, Zagreus, Dionysus, Christus, and Huitzilopotchli embody the economy's repression of sexual energy. As an autonomous power apparent everywhere, it reflects the primacy of work and the division of labour. Doesn't the old religious myth tell of divine beings who "die in the flesh and are reborn in the spirit"? It is a perfect model of the world inverted.

If one is to believe power's fairy-tales, Jupiter and Jesus experienced fleshless couplings upon Olympus and Golgotha, and the pure abstraction of their celestial sexual satisfactions consoles us for having, here below in the valley, mere tears at pleasure cut short by production anxiety.

Isn't it simply that life has been overtaken by alienating work, and this has smashed up the sexual universe and

each other and hold nothing back. They give it to the one who offers the most without hoping for anything in return. This way love grows ever stronger, and finds fresh pleasure even when languid and exhausted. Measureless, priceless, peerless is its intensity; and brimming with love those whose infinite thirst for pleasure can never be satisfied.

If some chance encounter offers me your love and my love to you, do not belittle the harmony of our desires by terming it exchange. There is no exchange except in dubious transactions. To love, do I need to be loved? Have I learned so well to love myself so little? If you are not filled with your own desires you have nothing to give. The attitude of 'you gave me a present so I'll give you one' will lead you gently into boredom, tiredness and death.

I am capable of anything when I am not waiting for anything or obliged to do anything. Whatever it is you are asking me for you are likely to find me without. I have more to offer those who are not hoping I will give them anything.

It is a matter of taking it all, in fact, and giving it all away, without verifying if portions are equal, or the scale of values similar without comparisons or weighing the pros and cons, the rights against the duties, the truths and the lies. Arrange it so that you always have something to offer instead of always demanding.

As for my apparently unrealisable desires, a thousand reasons would not make me give them up. I wish to keep every passion in me present and lively. One day you may very well find the way to accomplish them, whereas renunciation perishes everything it touches.

To say yes to life is no longer a dream imprisoned in endless sleep awaiting one millenarian night. The economic priority is ceding to the primacy of desires for life. Slowly now, then faster, round me, round every individual in search of autonomy, whirls the collective life-force's shuttlecock, weaving the old world's winding sheet.

In their efforts to make the revolution and dispense with the shabby dealings and dubious habits of the bourgeoisie, some people have dug up and praised ancient modes of exchange, as though they were not as repellent as any other. They call for the splendidly gratuitous potlatch where the giver received his return in terms of power, gratitude and ascendancy, for the presents he handed out prodigally to all around him! And then for the brotherhood of blood, mutual aid, or the ideology of solidarity. Are not gifts always linked to sacrifice, that loan at interest with which religion has always stifled freely-given gifts?

Only when you get satisfaction from ripping off the State, the boss, or a shopkeeper do you not get the general veto on free availability given you in your change. When will we recognise that it is all ours, when can we agree that the only reason for being protected against the wear and tear of life's pleasures is an economic one?

I look for no more amusements to console me in life's absence. What deficiency prompts one to do is botched from the start; for it is misery only which allows itself to be bought and sold.

Put a price on something and you kill it. Something catches your eye? Why not break whatever forbids you having it free? Can you hear it, all you greengrocers, the word in the street, warning you: "If you ask him to pay, he'll smash the shop"?

To drink, insatiably thirsty, at the "cup of life" is the best guarantee of its never running dry. Children know it they take everything as if it were an unlooked-for present. Lively senses make their world live, long before the economic imperative starts totting the bills run up by life; before they learn about reciprocity; before they set out to deserve their presents, demand their due, be rewarded for winning, or punished for a depreciation, or thank those who remove one by one the charms of an existence without opposition.

That is how passionate souls live who have rediscovered the child inside themselves. Lovers give and take everything from

exploded the unity people shared when they were simply gatherers, before hunting and agriculture brought slavery and class society?

It does not matter if in fact there ever were a state of society before trade civilisation, a vegetal era marked by femininity and mythically identified with the Golden Age. We will never return. We stand now upon the threshold of the unliveable, filled with compensatory nostalgia for a past that never was but inseparable from a history based upon the degradation of the will to live. This is the turning-point.

If it is true that sexuality isn't everything, it is, alas, because it is everywhere set behind glass, frozen, totalitarian, stood on its head. Are angelic pursuits like politics, numismatics, business and fishing really doing their best to chase sex away? For it returns on the lam of the negative, charged with rancour, contempt and hate. Wherefore so much ferocity in the competitive rivalry of huge companies, of shopkeepers and their nations, if not because sexuality repressed at the front door comes through the window at the back, and bearing not life but death? How else does one explain the bloody emotional plagues which ravage proletarian struggles for emancipation?

Butchered sexuality turns the rage to destroy what it cannot create against itself. Those who have lived in the shadow of religions all bear the black feature of the sexual sun inverted. Since we still see the celebration of erotic ardour couched in funereal allusions, we have to believe that the venom of dead gods has never ceased to poison us.

In contrast to sectarian insistence that pleasure is always mingled with pain, those sinister pleasure-seekers who ritually liken orgasm to a 'little death', Reich gladly recognised in genital satisfaction a well-spring of life and healthy sexuality. However, genitality was taken to be the whole gamut of sexuality when it was only a part of it. This is to put all your money on partial sexual emancipation; in the end you receive the prize you deserve: an even greater alienation.

In a sense, taboos and religious and moral prohibitions have protected orgasm from the vicissitudes of mercantile recuperation. Once revealed by that partial liberation the bourgeoisie introduced into society and into our individual bodies, genitality was to finish up in the hands of specialists in sexual economics. Cut off from the struggle for autarkic life, isolated from the reversal of perspective, it fell into the power of a system of oppression pursuing the piecemeal conquest of sexuality and thereby mopping up one of the last pockets of resistance.

Packaged as liberation, genitality becomes profitable. As with most passions, in the greatest and growing sector of life, it joyfully enters the universal factory: to *work*. Isn't this exactly what castration is?

Into the museum with male castration, that nightmare which haunted patriarchal power with chromographs of tiger hunts with phallus hoist, the Vendome column, and the last bullet! And let no-one attempt to replace castration with orgasmic stasis, with unhappy fumbblings instead of feminine or masculine or childlike genitality. The economy is clutching at life so hard it is stifling it, and that is the end of an evolution. Under such circumstances, people separated from their will to live are effectively castrated.

## **2. The world upside-down reaches the point at which it might possibly right itself when proletarianisation through work and constraint has no choice but to die — or to put creative pleasure foremost.**

*Fundamentally, saleable pleasure panders to sexual impotence. Aware of its growing debility, life contemplates the history of its exhaustion, and finds itself immediately faced with a choice: either the consolations of death, or the world-wide reversal of*

exchange which ages passion, wears out the heart's enthusiasm, weakens impulses, causes love to stoop and leaves desire dozing on the pillows of habit.

A passing tiredness is enough, a despondency in the will to live, whose sinusoidal rhythm differs in every person. But even when you rest from love, in some deep silence, passion still wells in anyone who can keep his appetite whetted. However, instead of remaining avid for every feeling until the heart of satiety is reached, we find lovers appealing to duty, demanding proofs, seeking for a return on their affection. Norms are installed which must be scrupulously respected, scatterbrained thoughtlessness is banned, while clumsiness, incongruities and fantasy become occasions for reproaches and sanctions. If they don't set about making the change to rediscover themselves, they'll have to borrow the crutches of a society which has generously sawn off their legs. Cold reason sees off the delirium of abundance and returns to argue *the part of things*. This is the invidious time when debts are claimed and must be paid, when rights mutually agreed to are exacted as duties paying interest and when an exchange of kisses parallels the exchange of gifts by those whose prestige is threatened.

In order mutually to appropriate each other and to measure each other's affection for the other, people end up persuading themselves that "their eyes are opened", that qualities offered are only on loan, that generosity is badly repaid, and that the attraction was in no way justified. Love complains of having spent all its funds, while regrets draw up a bankruptcy statement, passion goes to the bottom, affection turns to trade and friendship to denunciation. But it is a sensible arrangement and a private affair, a family affair, a thing between partners, a frank exchange.

How can you live in a world in which you pay for everything? The few great pleasures you have left to offer and to be offered you, you try to exchange, tot up and estimate, weigh for their relative merits.

cept a sudden unleashing of the will to live, or the multiplicity of desires patiently returned to life?

You accuse children of inconstancy and inconsistency because they are slow to acquire the metallic skin which serves you as protective packaging, and which adapts perfectly to the range displayed on the social shelving systems. And yet, do you not long to smash these rusty breastplates to pieces? However much they assure you of some sort of glory, it is at life's expense. Will you not find in the child you have been what you would have liked to have been, and what it is really possible to become once the social form which reduces us to its basic function of *producing* has been abolished?

What defines is necessarily odious. So often you have attempted to peg me down on your pinboards, hoping to seize me by one end, any end, by my name, registration number, profession, nationality, salary, reputation, some story of getting me on to your chessboard. But autonomy based on the freeing of intense pleasure cocks a snook at classifications and the confusion and indifference which corresponds to them. It shakes itself and takes a dust bath amid the thousand facets which make up the irreducible singularity of an individual, his desires and his passions, from the instant he is resolved to live instead of to fear. Roles have been the last market-oriented inversion of the metamorphosis to come.

*We have planned too frequently on not having enough and not enough on having plenty.* If love is blind, it's just that it sees nothing through power's eyes. Do not expect love to judge or govern for it ignores the relationship of exchange. Sufficient unto itself. As sexuality's horn of plenty, love is the finest expression of the will to live in this world where castration is rife, and it is the strongest element of our splendid savagery.

If, nevertheless, lovers who yesterday adored each other suddenly split from each other in hatred and contempt, it is quite unreasonable to seek some eternal law of decline, some fatality of tiredness. It actually comes about through the chain of

the world upside-down. The time when the former sustained the illusion of the latter is over, and over too is the route to annihilation passing itself off as public welfare and happiness.

When I reflect how the human race has persevered in its attempts to exterminate itself through wars, slavery, torture, hate, massacres, epidemics, money, power, work, whatever has not actually died seems to me all the more irreducibly elemental. Upon this final burst of life which can no longer be extinguished or hidden, I want to found a radically new society.

There is no mystique to life, only to its absence, nor reasons for life, only reasons for commercial imperialism which encircles it, and which confirms by its inability to swamp it, the indomitable character of life. The word 'life' loses its ambiguity as the structuring imposed by trade shows up everywhere through our so-called human relations. Life's reality does not accord with these loves you can buy and enjoy retail, and which go off to the factory as yesterday they went to the brothel, to sin, to the convent, to the family. Competitive bidding pares them down to boney profit-earning and production. Life cannot be reduced to some sort of vaginal, phallic, anal, digestive, cervical or clitoral spasm. It has no truck with economics whether sexual or gastronomic, political, social, intellectual, linguistic or revolutionary — it falls outside production norms. Nor does it replace old taboos with directives to break them. Life has neither goal nor finality. It escapes the economy and for fun will destroy it.

By breaking into history, by welling up just where moribund society meets individuals increasingly much less dependent upon it, life becomes strange and new. It does not matter that its discovery exposes how fragile it is to the vagaries of individual consciousness, to understanding clouded with confusion at its lack of energy and consequent rebuffs. As emancipation gropes through the dark it comes upon more marvels between earth and sky than commercial civilization has ever dreamed of.

*Death is what the dominant world thinks about.* The more life decays, the more the market reckons on the scarcity of intense pleasure and multiplies the number of survival pleasures on offer; which, as they are sold and bought, turn instantly to constraint and work.

As smug as a curate you decry the bureaucratic and bourgeois class as the carrion-crows of mercantile conquest, the undertakers' racket in a society which tears itself to pieces in the race for profit and power. But at least credit them with the sincere expression of their withering away. How excited they become over the price of things, accepting misery as though money were bound to bring it, and showing just how contemptible they are with their hatred for all that lives, their justice, their police forces, their freedom to kill, their civilisation.

But you who claim to be from the other camp, who bet on the breakdown of commodity distribution, on the end of the State and on the coming of classless society, who between the cheese and the sweet, start singing of revenge that sounds already like marching boots, are you any different from your enemies? Do you reek any less of death?

Do not tell me that you are celebrating the last days of the old world in advance. To wait patiently, even impatiently, for the final somersault of this society that gobbles us and drags us down the whirlpool of its long agony, is the way dead men pass the time. You promised yourselves the jubilee you are dying of waiting for so long ago, that all you have left is the desire to die. You spend as much time prophesying the apocalypse as a civil servant in calculating his future promotions. Like him, you have managed to find the market in boredom *interesting*.

Whether you are contemptuous of the old world or laud its virtues, you change the words but not the tune: political churches and family versions and cold buffet tables where everyone sounds identical — heroic and imbecilic — and where they sing the suicides' hymn.

sure of matching a house to every fantasy, dream, or childhood memory.

*The taste of metamorphosis is born of a disgust with roles.* Fashion, propriety, prices, what is in and what is out of date, the singular and the banal have always imposed on sartorial art a code of representation scarcely compatible with the fantastic desire to transform ourselves. Now that the spectacle has become so impoverished, in addition to the misery of clothes being uniforms showing position in the hierarchy, as in the past, roles expressed by dress are now compacted to functions in some socio-bureaucratic 'organogram'.

Blue work-denim clothes directors, women writers and labourers alike. Interchangeability brings home the lesson that everyone has his price, whether worth it or not, in the market of daily life. So, at the stock exchange where life is lost, a fall in price has the same value as a gain. If money makes for happiness or unhappiness, it is only the happiness or unhappiness of commodities.

Profitability is what makes the Emperor's nakedness appear like new clothes. What good are disguises? We keep them to hide some trifling liberty, some furtive peccadillo, some small job-lot in debauch which acquires us kudos when we admit to it. All roles are out-worn. Although they look human, their frequent patching lets the functional bone structure poke through, as bodily mechanism reproducing the economic mechanism which has been humanised.

There was a time when a policeman had a chance to recover some remnant of humanity when he stripped off his uniform. But when that uniform is the muscular cuirass of the torso, so that the functions of the boss, slave and star are how the proletarianisation of the body manifests, and when the exchange of life into social forms operates directly through osmosis of sensation and the glaciation of those forms into the opposite of what they set out as, what can we hope from emancipation ex-

*The exhaustion of exchange leads to global change.* Survival pleasures work for the survival of the system which produces them. The misery they bring expresses the unbearable boredom which generalised exchange, omnipresent business, and the cancerisation of life by the economy leads to.

In eras where trade scarcely moved as a result of religious occultation, the voyage and the adventure chiselled themselves into the art of constructing a destiny for oneself aided by or in spite of the gods. Pleasures and trials punctuated life on its way towards its inevitable conclusion, towards death sought as a challenge or fled from through trickery. The hard knocks of existence paid the price of the right of passage leading from this vale of tears to another world, paradisaical and infernal, true mythic fresco of our survival pleasures now demystified.

Death no long watches at the window of the after-life. Instead it siphons life away and hardens off our bodies till they reach the condition of goods for sale.

Why should we bother to get out of bed? The same pleasures rule in every clime, forbidden and inverted. Nevertheless, the need for movement persists, though surrounded by a growing pile of punctured illusions. If you go out on Sundays to admire the forest set behind its concrete curtains, cross the oceans or among pygmies who subsist on barter and hospitality, console yourself for the inhumanity of industrialised tribes, you end up feeling so strongly that you have lived celluloid life a million times through the same movies that you have nothing left but a passion to alter everything. Here and now.

Why flee until time or geography or social security cheques run out, when all around us the will to create a society in which life changes according to our passions is growing? Desire once mobile will bring about strange mutations: for though lovers swear undying vows that cannot be bought and sold there is quite a variety of forms that love can take, as they are finding out; and individual architecture will be quick to rise upon the ruins of buildings which were paid for. We know the plea-

The camp of the official revolution is bureaucracy's court of miracles. There, theologians mull over the Great Night and with subtle discrimination carve up the territory of angels and demons, while the crippled of the next insurrection work out which lines to follow, and the puritans finally resolve to profit from life, since only pleasures count for anything. They rub shoulders with the prosecution extolling the virtues of sin, preaching the duties of refusal, awarding certificates for radicalism, and denouncing the prevailing misery. To these judges reply counsel for daily life, and as scorn and contempt echo hate and derision, there rises from these communal assemblies a stench every bit as piss-ridden and carbolic as those that rise above central committees, G.H.Q's and police barracks. From such assemblies stride those glorious individuals resigned to misery, and the lost souls of terrorist dawn. For the cast of the dice on which you risk your life by doing in some magistrate or other public nuisance is only the harbinger of the final grand devaluation where death will be as nought. The most destitute forms of survival draw from the false freedom of nothingness and the contemplation of it an unlooked-for rise in price. All deaths are paid for in advance at usurious rates.

*No-one will right the world upside down with any part of him which is itself upside down.* We have fought the economy too much as economists and used this behaviour as an alibi. You don't fight consciously against regimentation by unconsciously regimenting yourself.

The development of intellectuality, which is inherent in trade's development, makes everyone willing to criticise the old world with a lucidity they neglect to apply to their own individual destinies. The irony of the world upside down confirms it so well that revolutionary theory's best guard dogs, though never ceasing to bark at the same pitch, are turning into power's best guard dogs.

We have lived through the becoming of trade, in a deathly dialectic which is precisely the history of the economy feeding on humanity, the history of an empire which grows and perishes to the exact extent that men produce it and submit to its power, thereby slowly reducing themselves to pure exchange values. Here we all are gathered together, at its extreme and final stage of development, to assist at its demise. We are, however, condemned to die with it, at least if we remain trapped in the trading reflex, if we allow the possibility which is staring us in the face to slip away, to set up a life dialectic, an evolution in which what is human finally escapes the economy completely.

Death draws power's lines of perspective so clearly that the feeling for a radically different way of doing things is beginning to catch the enthusiasm of anyone who has not given up living. The feeling starts with private individuals, in their irreducible subjectivity, in that part of life on which encouragement to work and submit to a particular regime only breaks its teeth.

Out of these stiff and ridiculous pawns on the chequer-board of profit, which to varying degrees we all are and where we find ourselves, life emerges in sudden jolts. This is where reversing the world upside down takes root, where we create the society which is based on intense individual pleasure and the destruction of all that hinders it. By destroying mercantilism everything becomes immediately freely available. These are not the fictions of a creature oppressed. They announce neither Golden Age nor lost paradise. They are a world in becoming, in which sooner or later each element forms into its opposite, dies and is reborn. But this becoming will have nothing in common with trade-based civilization. Let it be understood once and for all that beings and things do not change in similar ways in a society which reduces life to the production of dead things, and in a society whose history emanates from individuals' will to live.

Don't expect binding agreements, in fact expect nothing. I am no standard to go by, no way of measuring your conscience, no qualified judge of success or failure. I don't figure in your calculations; don't count on me, or on being on my side.

I don't claim to escape all the traps set by exchange. However, if your laws, and judges, law and order, licensing and financial services, your rules, your roles and conventions force me from time to time to go against my wishes, I know how to look and listen, speak, act and be present without taking anything in or giving anything out.

Watch out that you don't confuse a refusal to trade with the avoidance of traps through some ivory tower isolation. The garden I wish to tend is the one in which grow my life-long pleasures, it cannot be cultivated till it embraces the whole planet.

As far as the rest goes, it isn't because I don't want to get involved that I keep out of your mud-slinging polemics, competitive reflexes, crimes, and expensive pleasures. I simply aspire to utter gratuitousness, utterly useless personal pleasure. From this will to increase my enjoyment, whatever it consists of and however idle or passionate, I raise my spontaneous self-defence against being proletarianised by exchange.

The appropriation of people and things does not disgust me as a manifestation of injustice or as the basis of class society. Rather because it sets limits to my desires, imprisoning them, terrorising them, and transforming them into pieces of property. Those who 'don't want to get involved', because 'it's not my affair', and 'none of my business', are like the guardians of a tomb. They condemn racism, jealousy, greed, property, hierarchy only as a form of exorcism to alleviate their inability to stand on their own two feet without inciting comparison or soliciting approval. If you are awake to pleasure without limits, what price mother-country and frontiers, masters and slaves, gain and loss? Sexual exuberance is its own high, carrying enough impetus in its space and time to break whatever hems it in.



variant of suicide in which you feel you merely die faster if you struggle and anyway there's no change to look forward to.

Death has no more alibis. How can you deepen despair or survive more?...

Dance-time is here, folks, the artistic ballet of fucking it up, and shaking the old world to the ground.

History showed us over ten years ago the perfect way to topple our trade-based civilizations in their final self-destructive phase. I'll say it again: one trick is enough: free your pleasures, individually and collectively.

### **3. History will not turn the corner until each of us has.**

*I am no-one's representative and I have no programmes to push.* Why should I get involved in the mayhem of buying and selling? You might think all those struggles between warring tribes or between one religious mob and another pretty pointless, and think much the same of political chicanery, rival factions, and family feuds. Yet you still spoil for a fight and shout a lot when it comes down to ensuring things are done the way you like them to be.

Threatened relationships, groups, communities mean nothing to me if they mean supporting your friends at the expense of your neighbours, and when an expression of friendship involves signing mutual aggression-defence pacts, when the pleasures of drinking, lovemaking, talking and having a meal are paid for according to the dominant code of exchange, when you never get anything for nothing, when natural sympathies and antipathies wince each time they fail to concord with some radical theory, and when value judgements carefully overlook the fact they are based on a world inverted.

### **3. History about to undergo fundamental change, manifests in the individual as a fundamental change in his life.**

*The end of the proletariat also means an end to the proletarianisation of the body.* Beneath the misery of the labouring classes, nineteenth-century philosophers divined the incubation of total man and the age of liberty coinciding with the end of class society. Today only those modern philosophers who are tied to desks do not yet know that the proletariat remains an abstraction until founded on the struggle by every proletarian against the proletarianisation of his own body.

Stripped of its myths, with its spectacle and its misery in flat contradiction, the economy is simply a disease of the will to live, the very cancer of life. Its roots push further and further into an increasingly fragmented body as the economy invents a gastro-intestinal version of itself, to match a genital, ocular, and cervical version, an economics of the vital organs, functions and reflexes, which, modelled upon the dominant world, imposes return norms, profit margins and savings, expenses, will-to-power, and exchange.

And while this monstrous abstraction takes over gestures, muscles and bearing, any check on its advance holds the rest in check. There is not a disease, a satisfaction or a gesture which does not immediately translate the permanent struggle between the desire to find pleasure in all things and the fragmentation of the body into productive zones.

Class struggle is indissolubly in the street and in me.

*The best obtained by constraint becomes the worst.* Despite indignant protestations to the contrary, most people work to proletarianise themselves. It is unprecedented how the hunger for freedom is presently fed so many orders. Joyful libertarians, who damn me as an autonome, corner themselves by praising idleness while feeling guilty for contributing nothing to

the revolution. Your hatred for trade masks a deeper loathing, which reaches you when you glimpse yourself in the mirror of absent life, more and more like that which you attack. What interests you in this final battle is to have done with yourself.

Rejecting dominant society has become as tedious and constraining as accepting it because both one and the other obey the same master. Whether you fancy yourself as high-priest of negativity or hero of radical purity the old world goes down skid row very well on its own. Since trade progresses by negating itself, it fattens all the better on your criticisms of it since they mostly flow from your own economic reflexes: your need to keep up appearances, the work you do born of your will to power, your guilt and debts, the occasional blow-out.

No lesson is a good one, because every lesson is an imposition. If I give orders I join the intellectual workers, if I accept them I join the manual: I don't want to be a part of either. Where there is constraint there is work; and where there is work there is no pleasure. What prevents me from unreservedly enjoying myself stems from the world upside-down, even the impulse to reject it.

*A pleasure curbed is a pleasure lost.* The idea that one must orgasm at any price is just refurbishing old proscriptions with the same old consequences: timely support for those for whom revolution is a duty, radicality a test, life a spectacle.

While the old moles of the critique work at the collapse of the old world, love-libertarians work to improve the sexual economy. Obligatory pleasure replaces forbidden pleasure. Enjoyment is faced like some exam, with pass or failure the key. Eating, drinking, and making love ornament a good reputation. To win your badge of radicality, just indicate here the average length of your orgasms!

The sins of debauchery are finished since pleasure started to clock in at the factory each day. Break all taboos, economic progress demands it! Obligatory emancipation certainly bol-

the great break-through keep us below the low-water mark of impotence.

*Repetition breeds the emotional plague.* The sensation of being paralysed in turn paralyses; fleeing from the trap reproduces the trap; the race for change guarantees that nothing will change. Worry, stress, fear, shame, contempt, aggression, will to power are all born of a repressed will to live, itself repressive. You get worn out if you feel you have always got to conform, play your part, do your duty, or accept the way things are.

These emotional squalls which gust round us like an unhealthy fog were once grist-to-the-mill for tribunes, orators, and others subscribing to power. Their grocer-style shamanism drew heavily upon illusory hopes of a sudden upheaval, the coming of the Kingdom of the Just. But the anger they aroused in the crowds was not life bubbling up, so much as an animal tearing at a chain. This form of getting your kicks is the same as getting the insults you worked full quota for at fantastic reductions in the bargain basement. Locking up the body in fraudulent emancipations, mob anger tears down the prisons only to erect new ones.

Tear-jerking politicians with a quiver in their voice now merely make us laugh, the more so because you can't hide the misery in society under the blanket of grandiose nationalist (or internationalist) ideology any more. Fascism and Stalinism base their appeal for change on the we-must-tighten-our-belts syndrome, or self-destructive hysteria. As a result the emotions you can call on to encourage self-repression are narrow indeed. And hero-worship and leadership cults go bust through a short-fall in mystery and razzamatazz. When you know for certain that every moment is like every other moment, that everywhere's the same, that all adventures can be repeated indefinitely, that wherever you swim it is the same waters of profit, under the same sun of goods-for-sale — you can grok it: boredom is what exchange is all about, its distinguishing state of consciousness. Emotional plague is a

the world upside down, as if an iron lung or a force pump were to draw out of the body's sexual energy the work-energy to repress it.

*Whatever is repressed is inverted and creates its own opposition.* Compelled endlessly to expand and renew itself, the process of producing goods for sale sheds whatever forms impede its development. In one of these changes, which might, variously, signal a burst of revolutionary activity or another fashionable contortion, psychoanalysis is born. While it does reveal the complexity of the conflict between 'pleasure principle' and social necessity, it masks the simple nature of exchange and dissimulates the new oppression in the rejection of the old. For though it denounces the morbid nature of repression it is only to encourage the sort of release which proves twice as profitable. It relieves the tension and fits you back in, at a profit.

The number of release mechanisms is equalled only by the number of frustrations, but, byzantine as they are, the psycho-analytical sciences agree at least on this elementary truth: they are all paying ventures both in money and power. Whether they write learned footnotes on the repressed sadism evident variously in the surgeon, housewife and mother, policeman and assassin, or whether they recognise sadism as a form of inverted pleasure, they cannot admit without repudiating themselves that the fundamental repression is the inversion of life due to the need to produce profit and prestige.

We are not less barbaric than the Mongol hordes, merely more bureaucratic, more democratically distributed, nearer to death seen as a hard-won exit... The racket is worn out. It's moribund. They wheel out the old prohibitions, and break them, but increasingly verbal incontinence is enough: when too many people get worked up over crimes committed by the State, stories released about assaults on the police lower the temperature. The push-me/pull-you of conflicting emotions maintains the body's effective blocks while wet dreams about

sters up the fundamental prohibition; it excludes all pleasure which claims to escape constraint, work and exchange.

Where pleasure does not demolish economics, there's only halfhearted economical freedom, in which each liberty taken conceals an impulse stifled, and each stifling is in the name of liberty.

Aesthetes of the good life and bureaucrats of classless society are off the same shelf, while those who find misery salutary hob-nob with the anti-survivalists. The crush of rivalry is thickest around pleasure. Any return to the past merely attempts to gild what is only there to hold a price-tag. Sex has hardly emerged from having to produce babies before it lines up to compete for bigger, better, longer orgasms. But for that reason do we have to go back to courtly love, flirting without fulfilment, or the china-doll syndrome? Or any other archaic chastity? But the inverting of bygone pleasures is not the least of today's awkward pastimes. We've all seen groups resolutely opposed to Family and State appeal to clan organisation and revive mystic solidarity, severing friendships to follow the honourable course of action. Artists in regression and modernisers of recuperation come from the same piss-pot: Business.

As for nit-picking distinctions by forensic pathologists, what do I care for your carefully-labelled glass jars marked heterosexuality, homosexuality, perversion, sadism, coprolalia, normality and deviance?

Pleasure has no frontier and I expect to be prepared against any attempts to limit it. When what is desirable and pleasurable turns into necessity I flee as I would from work. I am not turned on by their death-wish which only operates in business anyway as far as I can see. Power's mangy curs can worry the scabs of mastery and submission, frustrating and being frustrated, causing suffering and suffering themselves, and keep it to themselves. I don't wish to know those who enjoy being proletarianised.

*Work is the opposite of creativity.* As human behaviour usually conforms to commercial mechanisms, history has ceaselessly impoverished the part officially set aside for creative people. Artists, craftsmen, sorcerers, poets, composers, visionaries — anyone who arrogates the passion for creating to themselves — have been wrung through the mangle of industrialisation and the breakdown of the artisan class by the marketing of culture and concretisation by trade, and dried out under the ministrations of bureaucrats.

Creativity is steam-rolled by work just like any other manifestation of life. Seeing how directly it now serves commercial interests shows that its rivalry was only ever tolerated, if repressed and inverted.

Our feeling for the past had better not hide the misery and wealth of our present! However moving I find the works of musicians, painters, engravers and builders, I can see all too clearly the signs of passion defeated and involuntary renunciation. The vivid flash of their explosive energy lingers with us; it should never have been fettered by intellect, survival considerations, money or the will to power. What delights me is that you can still feel the sexual impetus when you get close — which is the desire to go further and reverse the inverted world of creation.

What is genius, familiar spirit and breath of inspiration? Showcases to which the organisation of labour allows a narrow margin of freedom, a false liberty parodying the autarkic nature of life itself. Perhaps in pre-agrarian eras a primitive creativity existed, involving the whole body, simultaneous and social, channelling natural forces, and of which magic, alchemy, art and inventive deliriums are just memories.

What is certain is that the need to produce represses creativity, fragments it, and turns it towards its negation. Creativity is the aborted child which alchemy attempts mystically to bring to life, sensual experience condemned to go into exile in the head as intellectual work escapes from manual work, the

Ah, but you say, people change, they grow up, change their ideas, improve with age, or fail to reach their potential, get quite the wrong idea about themselves, or maybe surpass themselves. Really they are just thrashing about. They escape from one trap and fall in another, struggling and squirming in their private Nessus' shirt. What they are looking for is the person refusing to find it; when they curse the exile's path they expel themselves again from life.

*A society based on trade destroys itself with repressive measures which evoke explosive revolts.* The soldier, the bureaucrat, and anyone with a little power to wield knows how the body's musculature seizes up and blocks the welling of desire. They know well enough that the need to set an example and maintain a front double-bolts the padlocks on their diaphragm, that great gate of the will to live and let live of their libido.

Each time our ear is bent by social constraint — that rationalisation of agreements that economics imposes on every group — a cop, a soldier, or a priest wakes up. If one is to judge by people's ordinary behaviour, these ancient reflexes are hardly less obvious among those who decry them the loudest.

When the body, stuffed unctiously into its shell, assumes the impassivity of the objects around it, the death dance twitches its arms and legs, and the flow of pleasure breaks up piecemeal, like a rash of boils, into scorn and hate and the tics of frustration. The moment it becomes aware of it the proletarianised body recognises a fundamental repression which spawns all the others and which causes the ebb and flow of regulatory rage. The history of trade across the ages has reached its apogee under spot-lights: its very materiality reveals how the economy can only repress life.

When the psychoanalysts declared the body ineluctably mysterious, the process of commodity exchange had not yet reached its fullest state of development. Now we can see that it grows in fits and starts, and reveals in that perpetual motion of exchange an increasingly absurd mechanism for turning

## **2. The world upside-down can revert when exchange (the motor in the proletarianisation process) can choose only between putting enjoyment first, as freedom to do what you will, or death.**

Exchange is the shortest route between one trap and another. Long lines of steel cages with lonely occupants roll down the canyons of our city jungles. It takes a snarl up and a crash to wrench these creatures from their hypnotic fixations, and then they only show rage. Like a robot, the motorist is so enmeshed in the commodity he becomes part of it.

What is human in us is slowly turning to stone. Treat your heart as a motor, your skin like coach-work, and you can evaluate your movements in terms of mechanical jigs. Suddenly a man in the crowd stops, smacks himself on the forehead, and fires at random into the passers-by, trying to drag as many toward death with him as he can.

Exchange paralyses the living. The sensation of being caught like a rat in a trap is enough to set one seething with rage, the gnawing pangs of freedom skewered like a kebab on the prong of impotence. Emotional plague blinds one to everything except the shade of death.

Moments are rare when you don't feel the cold hand of business clamped on your shoulder, and life trickling down the runnels of profit and power. Every step conceals a pitfall. If you escape the family you stumble into the couple, if you flee solitude you fall in with the group. From school we leap to the assembly-line, from barracks to political organisation, from society to the cemetery. As you grow older and your roles get more complicated, your sacrifices turn into permanent renunciations; each step is no easier or cheaper. Commercial relations are responsible for every discomfort I feel.

unexplained from which the scientific unconscious derives its windfalls and which the economy recuperates.

The end of tolerated creativity — the end of all forms of art — nevertheless identifies the passion for creation with free and intense pleasure in life. Upon this rock the fundamental prohibition commercial society has never ceased to build its churches of liberty. The disgust for forced labour and the allure of creative work allows the do-it-yourself trade to turn us each into his own employer. Staining glass, cuisine, distilling liqueurs or arranging flowers, telling stories and singing, relaxing and dreaming are creative pleasures; the imperative to produce has no scope for them.

The ideas that to escape survival sickness, *one must create*, manages to create a void in what could eradicate it. If it is true that a pervasive discontent gnaws at us all, even those who reckon themselves happy; if it is beyond dispute that creativity — by which I mean the construction of life according to our desires — is absent worldwide, you may now rejoice: we are each of us about to be given formal notice of our obligation to *produce* our own happiness.

By revealing and opening up the SCAM, Leftism cut the ribbon on the back-roads of work. Originally you could look on the scam as a self-defence mechanism for pleasure. It taught me to work as little as possible, to get hold of useful money without wearing myself out, to dance past orders, to ridicule superiors, to steal from the state. But the ruinous condition of the job-market swiftly turned it into parallel work. It has become a means of making money without having to go into business. Autonomy-as-sauce tarts up reality in which you can each be your own boss, and exploit yourself directly.

That the law of the scam necessarily rules in prisons, factories, barracks and Iron Curtain countries gives the analogy by which to measure our jailhouse universe. The scam's best ally is the oppression which justifies it.

Behaviour determined by economic considerations is so wretched that it considers avoiding work a great pleasure, that is, when it doesn't push the joke to the point of losing more energy in the ingenuity of avoidance than in doing the work itself.

Every chain of events is sinister. Do not ask me to choose between the chain you have to fasten yourself and the one which turns duty into normal convention, a promise into a contract, and your fear of others into dominating them. I do not want to fight the commodity with what it absorbs of my life but with what life recovers by smashing it. There is no other way to be creative.

*From pleasure's diminishing returns comes the desire for real-life.* When 'living too hard' means living intensely, you can question yourself about how fundamentally inhuman this world upside-down is. Do you have to wait till this exuberance, paradoxically lived out in a passionately self-destructive way, attenuates into survival care and moults through patient labour into an object for exchange?

We used to fling ourselves at pleasure as into a fight with the odds against us. Now it is pleasures which hurl themselves on us in order to rip off whatever is still warm and palpitating until, we are bled white with boredom.

Nothing cures survival sickness. Teeth will not sprout again on stumps. Survival pleasures are the last stage of this incurable disease called life turned toward death; the final petty irritations of life capsized. But the old fatalism of death as king is now shown up as an imposture. For in the very decay of the abstraction freezing life we see the social resurgence of the will to live. Economic imperialism which was falsely identified with our universal destiny is faltering in its attack. We can destroy it now because everyone can feel the conflict in himself between his urge for enjoyment, and the false satisfactions of commercialised pleasure exciting him yet denying him gratification. Such awareness is perceived directly in the body.

the militarism of the Ancient Regime, rigid with pride and serenity. It fed on the diet with declining appetite as progress in commerce imposed it more heavily on the will to live — it is significant that each decisive step in the expansion of commerce was expressed by social melancholy and funereal taste, in the suicidal ardour of pointless slaughter. It is on the skids today, treating human beings only as something costing money, as capital; it differs from feudal or despotic prodigality by doing it cheaper. It conquered its democratic laurels with that political art which has now been reduced to capacity to govern; in other words, if you don't pay it some attention, it will pay attention to you.

Politics is only ever jacobin, leninist, authoritarian. What else could it be, seeing that it is only economic understanding of human affairs, and that the exercise of power has passed from feudal pomp to State apparatus? It has long sown confusion by treating as identical those who know they are the proletariat and the politicised proletariat. Individuals are abstracted from their particular struggles for life and turned into pawns for the chess-board of imperialist economics. This way of looking at things — the economist attitude propagated in the name of lucidity — is why the timid attempts at anarchist self-management in Spain aborted and why the will to live has never been at the centre of the seizure of consciousness.

We have only ever exchanged one kind of survival for another. The worst is taking place today under the politically popular slogan of 'Changing life'.

of a new business practice, the implantation of an agricultural system, the free circulation of goods, for industrial production, for the obligation to consume.

The above examples show change opening new doors on a world quite definitely circumscribed. How can an organisation founded on the perpetual exchange of the life-force into work-force tolerate a change of life which is not just a new form of work?

*Without individual emancipation, the engine in business's drive to self-destruction is class struggle.* The bourgeois-bureaucratic class and the proletariat are two objective abstractions in an identical alienation lived differently. They reveal the contradictory movement in the nineteenth century strengthening and enfeebling the commercial process.

The dominant class is the agent of commercial expansion. The proletariat, which aims to liquidate the bourgeoisie and dissolve itself as a class, is the destructive element in trade. But while working for the expansion of that trade, the dominant class works also at its decline. It behaves as a class condemned to impoverish the human element in itself. It has no way out but death, and, as such, it obeys to the letter the economic system's path of development.

The proletariat itself need not necessarily end up as the a-human abstraction the bourgeoisie and bureaucrats turn into. But if it does renounce its aim to create a society based on the will to live and gives up attempting to destroy the economy, it will trap itself in the negative function of trade, as proletariat abstracting itself from itself. In this way it becomes the agent of business self-destruction, and works to renew trade and decay life, in pursuit of universal proletarianisation.

In this sense the proletariat wages a suicidal struggle, and its project of a classless society is as attractive as a cemetery. The most vociferous defenders of the proletariat know it.

In the nineteenth century, however much it spat back out on the plate, the industrial and industrious mentality absorbed

The psychosomatic landscape constantly modifies its profile according to the collision between life's desires and their falsification via the economy. Thwarted pleasures reflect back through all the organs like echoes of commercial castration. Every illness is an expression of some disorder in the will-to-live. Heart murmur, toothache, love-sickness. Analogies of the kind children, dreamers, lovers and madmen adopt readily give the lie to the doctors' quackery and deadly ritualised mumbo-jumbo. It's a clear pointer to cure for cardiac, genital, abdominal, urinary, cervical, respiratory, intestinal, even cellular disorders (the infamous cancer argument). It has never been so obvious that a cure based on the emancipation of pleasure demands the annihilation of mercantile civilisation.

Survival sickness devours the bourgeois-bureaucratic class and proletariat alike. With one difference however. the first lot reason in terms of remedies, in other words, of organising the disease. They conceive of no other remedy than death, which they identify with the death of the entire human species. The second has long let itself be caught in the trap. It has negated its proletarian condition with the means sold to it by a dominant class, itself proceeding quite unconsciously to proletarianise itself.

When emancipation proletarianises, it masks oppression. The moment a person who is ill accepts the illness he is incurable, the moment his will to live tolerates it like a parasitic implantation which only treatment *from outside* can reabsorb or extirpate. Because the commercial process the ruling class directs and which directs it in turn has such fatal consequences, such also are its remedies. The therapeutic it recognises either cures or kills you. Its final solution to survival sickness hangs on an apocalyptic upheaval of the commodity system world-wide.

For the proletarians however, the liquidation of the trading system is only an effect of freeing pleasure. They can take the direct route to the end of proletarianisation — and the end

of survival — because they are not the managing directors of their own alienation. They undergo the hustle of life as an oppression emanating from the ruling class, and when they feel the conflict between free sensual gratification and economics, there is nothing to hold them back from jettisoning work, constraint, intellectualism, guilt, or will to power.

I want to fight for more fun, not for less pain.

#### **4. You reverse the perspective of power by returning to pleasure the energies stolen by work and constraint.**

*Whatever represses pleasure will be destroyed by it.* Sabotage, absenteeism, voluntary unemployment, riots, wildcat strikes, stealing for fun and doing things for the hell of it — the ax is laid to the commercial tree and I'm delighted.

As sure as work kills pleasure, pleasure kills work. If you are not resigned to dying of disgust, then you will be happy enough to rid your life of the odious need to work, to give orders (and obey them), to lose and to win, to keep up appearances, and to judge and be judged.

I am not calling on you to make an effort, but to leave things alone. Because of the tyranny of commercial relations, pleasure's ways are secretive; but it is still from pleasure that the ground is cut away, where the foundations are sunk and the powerful edifices of State, profit and hierarchical power are erected and decay, and which is at the source of so much error, so many pointless battles. In the search for endless pleasure, the proletariat returns to what it could not take by assault, as jungle invades a town when the structures of state collapse.

Working a little to get by, keeping the way I rob the State legal, nervous about touching a girl on the street, or of assaulting the policeman who calls me over, are some of my constraints, society's way of clubbing me over the head and compelling me

## **Chapter 2. INTENSE PLEASURE MEANS THE END OF EXCHANGE IN ALL ITS FORMS**

### **1. In civilisation based on trade, all change turns into exchange.**

*The history of civilised man has been only the history of the goods he produced, which self-destruct while destroying the producers.* Barter is the starting point. It is set up with the agrarian economy and terminates in the industrial era. Its acutest crisis occurs at the point of maximum expansion and internal decay, which so rarefies life that it is business relations which have a human face. And this human face is what socialism hopes to give itself!

When individuals have left only the miserable production of their misery, a way out suggests itself — the demand for self-management. This time the final swindle will spill the beans on all the others that were swung before. If each stage of economic development runs with blood spilled to get reforms which only modify slavery, it signifies quite clearly that all struggles for freedom obey a law of business expansion. Social conquests have only ever ratified results obtained in advance. Their victories have always been those of trade. People thought they were fighting for justice, equality and liberty, but in fact they were fighting for economic imperialism, for the painful birth



view: profit first, and on with the exploitation until we are all destroyed.

And yet you could say that a certain kind of nature does respond to the systematic denaturation of the economy. However compliant with the demands of capital are the great inventions of the wheel, the boat, the compass, the bed, cooking, dialectics, what you will, since born to and nursed by profitability, they may stem from one of life's ironies, the sexual totality panic button buried in the subconscious. We now know what part the primordial relationship of woman and child has played in architecture, navigation, and a whole group of discoveries attributable to the single need to produce.

In childhood — you have forgotten — you find it funny to wipe your nose *and the rest* on the serious scientific attitude, which is another name for serious profit accounting. The will to live reduces the bogus miracles of commercial society to their proper proportions — anodyne.

Work and constraint trace the roads to impotence. Out of revulsion, people start to learn how to free themselves and what they want from the commodity-matrix, as the only way to create a human context. And so gradually we are finding out how to get what we want from things and circumstances, which in fact is the only way we can relate to them. We will achieve by our own individual creativity what compulsion has never managed to make us achieve collectively. This is the basis for assemblies of universal self-management.

to do what I don't want to. But power doesn't have me by the short and curls twenty-four hours out of twenty-four. Why stretch out all day the economist behaviour it demands of me for a few hours? Why move me from one factory to another, set me up in controversy to make money out of me, push my views on the Opinion Exchange, bind me with ties of affection, force me into your rhythms, measure my productivity, tell me 'I must' and stifle 'I want', make me pay for my pleasures and compensate my inevitable frustration with the small change of aggression? Why?

Submission to discipline is the strength of the State, and is never so powerful as when it can take advantage of self-denial. But lucidity is more intimate. The enemy is a creature of habit. To prolong the pleasure of writing this book, am I to transform it into drudgery, forced labour, production batches, time schedules, hourly rates? Or worry what you'll think of it, or whether the text does its job and makes sense? I shall be content to throw light on my desires, reinvent those that are cockeyed, reach a free state of spirit and cast this summary in book-form into the shops, where you can steal it, keeping what pleases and throwing out the rest.

Every time you work you destroy yourself. The little time I find myself locked up in barracks, as it were, is always enough to make me desert and create occasions for deserting. I allow myself to be won over by the release from the agreement to do what is boring me. The taste for pleasure without reference to anyone else or their opposition spontaneously renders me perfectly useless to mercantile society, which makes its uselessness to me all the more obvious.

Pleasure avoids becoming a commodity on condition that it destroys it. But this it undertakes only if it can escape a while. For it is not the hungriest who have made hunger strikes, nor those who enjoy themselves least who revolt for universal self-management.

Any temptation to live is an attempt to do so. Momentarily saved from the grip of the commodity I understand better how to break it. Only my pleasures penetrate my shelter, where I am free of constraint, and exist only for myself, to the delight of whatever attracts me. I do not worry over the consequences.

When the struggle against misery becomes the struggle for passionate abundance, you get the reversal of perspective. Doesn't each of us dream of making what gives him intense pleasure the ordinary stuff of his everyday life? As you slide down the slopes of pleasure till you reach the sweet water in which life is reborn do you not feel the old obligations to produce, earn a living, educate yourself generate reputation and promotion, give and take orders? But it is really so easy to turn your back on work, fear, rewards and punishment, to smash the mirror of roles and discover on the other side of the only real truth of life, the overflowing richness of amorous embrace, the exultation in creating, a chance encounter, the changes in organic rhythms, the taste of life restored to whatever you are, free from the merchants of universal blandness. If you reach the heart of yourself you know how to build the world out of the ruins around you.

It was a mistake to rail against the uselessness of salon revolutionaries, for no revolution has succeeded whose fate was not sealed in intellectual cenacles, unfortunately for those who had to spill their blood.

Over drawing-rooms and pubs, religious sects and family gatherings, bed at least has the advantage of giving least encouragement to speechifying, profligacy, recuperation, work to the greater glory of battle, and the waging of war by dint of proclamation. Rather it inclines one to idle and dream, caress, make love till you grow deaf to orders, insensible to fear, hungry for endless voluptuous pleasures. And what a privilege! Those who rise from bed to arm themselves at least know why they go to fight.

adventures, music, our roving upon earth and water, in air and fire?

I am well aware of the limits beyond which an object loses its charm. However pleasing, this wine glass bears the mark of profitability cut into each of its seductive facets. Even stolen, it is tainted with the infamy of price. Everything about it follows a fundamental corruption, and one fault ruins the whole. The pleasure of draining it, gazing at it, holding it in my hand, is smeared with the sticky thumbprint of business.

From now on I would like all objects however trite to escape power's surveillance, for surely at the very least the diversion [détournment] of methods inherited from capitalism should eliminate at root what in a fine piece of cut-glass troubles the free flow of my thoughts. It is impossible to enjoy anything made by work and constraint.

I like to think a front-runner of such a generalised move towards diversion [détournment] is to be found in ecologist technology. Not that solar energy, soil regeneration, an end to deep ploughing, or the study of vegetal sensitivity escapes capitalism's exactions with its restyling of stock, its development of the anti-pollution market. But, behind the cynical wheeling and dealing which snuffles at every trough, a long-distant desire to recreate nature comes through.

Nature has never really existed. Originally assimilated to divine power, the rule of nature was the law of the gods, or, in fact, of sorcerers and priests. When the production economy developed, nature becomes the object of work, exploitable material. In the end it shares with the proletariat the doubtful privilege of being recognised as an object but not as subject.

The laws of profit and the society managing to survive them can consider nature only in terms of separate existence, not as central to the life of intense pleasures we demand today. Work-centred civilisation considers nature hostile. How could it do otherwise? Work has always treated nature as an enemy, in its usual habit of twisting things back-to-front to fit its point of

## **5. Individual excitement is born in the moment of abolishing work, and becomes collective as it joins the diversion [détournment] of the means of production.**

The rhythms of business society have overprogrammed the body to dance fear, contempt, humiliation, and the seeking of revenge: it's the dance of the carnivore, the hunter, the copper, the terrorist, the bureaucrat. Don't you feel now how it could be to walk like the cats, unpredictable, partisans of living life to the limits, guerillas for pleasure, poets of lightning autonomy, in league with an irresistible force?

Business relations can be poisoned; so too can the will to live. So we will give this dead civilisation its coup de grace now, not through the force of things but in the excitement and enjoyment which obliterates them.

Crises multiply, we no longer count the shocks, the old State and economic edifice reels. You might think a huge burst of laughter would bring it down.

Creating for fun is spreading throughout what used to be models of organisation for everyday life — the factories. More and more unselfconsciously sabotage transforms assembly lines into amusement arcades, changes a warehouse into a free distribution centre, the boss and the agitator get greeted with jeers and cat-calls. So who is going to seize the factories to organise work in another form in them?

Everything work has produced has been stolen from the creativity of millions of proletarians. So are you astonished to see real creative workshops emerging from the systematic dismembering of the factories? Do you doubt that these dry wombs of business could give birth to what we need to construct our homes and our pleasures, upon the ruins to build our dreams,

Instead of preaching revolt and radicality, leave every proletarian time to recall what life is and to drop what prevents him living it, to discover, behind the conflicting wills imposed on him, what it is he really wants. Abandon him to his pleasures and bad trips, his sympathies and antipathies, to his sparkle and drive and his laziness, excitation and detumescence. Get off his back and let him lie on it!

When they are caught in the irrepressible rush of sexual excitement people quickly discover a violence which they can use to satisfy their pleasures, and equally to smash down what stands in the way of satisfaction. The revolution will be a gathering of speed as the living race towards life. Then we will see if such a tide-race leaves the stucco walls of hierarchy, State and commodity civilisation standing.

It is only a matter of reversing the order of priorities, of opposing the look of love to the perspective of profit and power, of ceasing to ride our passions against nature. Reversing perspective is not the reversal of the world upside-down but is its consciousness and initial practice. Each one starts with him/herself, creates his/her autonomy and finds his/herself at the centre of a struggle between the will to live and the power which transforms it into death-reflex. The class struggle is suddenly as present in the individual as it has always been in society. And it raises a query at once personal and collective: What freedom can a person hope for if his function is to impose work and constraint?

*On the far side of sexuality reduced to the genitals lies global sexuality.* Since market exchange lifted the remaining mysteries from pleasure in order to rank it in profitability graphs, success and failure rates, specialisation needs and hierarchic models, the fear of sin which was so easily alleviated by bleeding yourself with the leech of devotion, has given way to anxiety about other people, and fear at not fulfilling the contract, and an obsession with maintaining a balance among one's conflicting emotions.

As the last stage in sexual fragmentation and dysfunction, genitality has promoted orgasm to the rank of universal model of satisfaction and frustration. And what better reproduction of the mechanisms governing us: a charge-discharge mechanism reducing erotic tensions to zero in a subtle coven of erogenous triggers, with feedback, ball bearings, regulators, lubricants, changes of oil, and all this to culminate in spending, in loss of self, a consumption of vital flux for which recuperated work, deposit arrangement and retention schemes offer to compensate.

Sexuality reduced to orgasm carries impotence as the indelible mark of economic castration.

If, on the other hand, loving gives a sense of fullness, an exhilaration like nothing else, it is because the grip of trade is less blatant here than in the pleasures of eating, drinking, looking and travelling. It is not in love to reduce itself to genitality and its concomitant forms of chastity. It has withstood economic encroachment so well that it is one of those increasingly rare states which are indescribable. The unsayable reveals the presence of life, which is nothing if it does not become all.

Every satisfaction is sexual and comes from the worldwide sexual impulse. But separated from others, it swiftly reproduces separation from life and yields to the death reflex.

You always want to recreate pleasures in their sexual unity, in opposition to that reductionism which separates them. If ever you have tasted the unquenchable thirst for intense pleasure you know that the life-force is a spring which never runs dry. One pleasure calls to another, and though one tires of an isolated amusement, a multitude of desires wakens a host of joyous satisfactions. And this is how one fulfilment undoes ten frustrations, time condenses instead of trickling away, and a moment contains eternity.

Life with all the stops out is the only thing I live for. You won't find it among your furtive pleasures and chance bits of luck, as evasion or childishness, before you wake up for the

morning shift and a reasonable dose of submission. The only reality which matters to me is this one, for it is the only one to create.

*If you don't make your own life you lose it.* Social disintegration has left individuals as the basis for what can be launched against this process. It leaves it up to them, however, either to fall for business reductionism or to found a society free from every kind of power, profit, and exchange, according to their desires.

Where lies voluntarism? In giving way to fun the more fun I want to have; in that pliant state in which the more I wish to enjoy myself the less I work; and in pleasure, where the less I work the more I want to set up the conditions suitable for endless pleasures? Or is it, perhaps, in the blank wall of the State, the spectacle, in the goods on sale, which is what revolution's pimps and theory's travelling salesmen are working to distribute?

All pleasure is creative if it avoids exchange. Loving what pleases me, I have to build a space in life as little exposed as possible to pollution by business, or I will not find the strength to bring the old world down, and the fungus among us will rot my dreams. While the State is in disarray, strike hard at business and its friends.

Doing exactly what you feel like is pleasure's greatest weapon, connecting individual acts with collective practice; we all do it.

If disgust with life at the level of getting by made the movement of 1968, laying hold of life will begin the era when universally people will run their lives themselves.

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Raoul Vaneigem  
The Book Of Pleasures  
8 January 1979.

Retrieved on January 10, 2011 from [www.scenewash.org](http://www.scenewash.org)  
*Le Livre des plaisirs* (Encre 1979). Translated by John Fullerton  
as “The Book of Pleasures” (Pending Press. 1983)

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and awareness matter to me if they do not deepen the intensity of my pleasure, liberate my passions or feed my will to live?

Each time groups form through thinking in a similar way rather than because the desires they set about harmonise, business society does not have to lift a finger to recuperate what these groups think up. However at ease ideas may be in every head, they never leave power’s orbit. But they rot what they contact and only intense pleasure can uproot and destroy them, by going beyond them.

From now on the intellectual function perishes through over-nourishment. In the extreme abstraction which has laid hold of pleasure, the point of reversal is reached when the only language I aim to have always with me is that of intense pleasure, as if I had one of those wines which need to breathe and develop before being drunk.

Inverting the order of priorities, I wish to place the work of thought in fee to what it has so long treated as frivolous, as merest nothings. A dream, a fugitive memory, an impression, momentary luck, a kiss driving me wild – those are what I wish to grasp with all the clearheadedness they contain. In this I keep to the heart of my personal history, and it is there I am aware of setting about what is now historically possible: the elimination of the State and of its omnipresent separate thought.

There is an alchemy at which every one feels himself to be mysteriously adept, and whose imperatives science has veiled. It seeks a light none can dim to counter deadly radiation by business – irradiation by life!

How can one understand reason in the presence of pleasure? The aerial of desire picks up only what it wants to. Finding pleasure everywhere interests me too passionately to halt at words attempting to pin me down, to define, judge, inflate or whittle me down in accordance with the variable lights of power in office and their ability to replace themselves. He who goes his way seeking all the amusements you cannot price quickly learns to avoid traps, slipping away without difficulty from

“you must” and “you can’t” which otherwise would injure him daily with a thousand running sores. It is not the voluntarism of rejection which leads to a game like this but the epidermal sensitivity of “I’d like”, “I love”, “I like it”, “I do not like”, “I would really like”, which is the music of the self’s opulence, the very impulse of the will to live, the whirlpool of desire into which are carried word for word measurement, judgement, comparison, evaluation, exchange.

The few societies in which trade is rudimentary have kept a livelier imprint of sensual intelligence. In such places hands heal, looks hypnotise, a softly spoken word unlocks rivers, a desire overturns laws held immutable, signs charm animals and plants. Who is talking about supernatural abilities? It is simply a matter of an approach to nature, but one which “seduces” rather than, as do industrious spirits, reduces it to an *object* of work.

The civilised body agonises, galvanised and sucked into a factory of muscles and nerves and effort, sport, productive capacity, asepsis, aesthetics, shame and torture, neurosis, and sado-medical experiment. Nonetheless its double language is always putting out the contradictory message of life and death. Anxiety, fear and oppression weigh upon and contrast the thoractic cage, so that the heart like a bird inside it, smashes against the bars and shatters, falls, and ceases to quiver. On the contrary, the way happiness breathes, the way passion surges, our hearts have the whole body to disport in and can be heard throughout. The imprisoned heart is heard through a stethoscope and belongs to the doctor. The passionate heart fills all space with life and rings like an organ playing to fantastic echoes. The same applies to every organ of the body.

We know that hands which smooth away pain, which create and caress, play and excite one to intense pleasure, will soon prevail over those reduced to manipulating commodities; and also we know that intelligence is going to cease to identify with the intellectual function. If the brain only operates at a third of

its capacity, is not that precisely because it works, because it has been cut off from the body and made to join the head? Allow it to adapt to mounting desire and unite with the sexual impulse, and we would be unable to refrain from the impression that we are in the process of creating the superior intelligence of our animal nature.

#### **4. The end of the State and the end of intellectuality are one and the same.**

*Sensual intelligence will bring about the classless society.* How can we get rid of leaders if we do not drop the intellectual function, work's permanent representative loose in our heads? Any rejection not based on our will to live is simply another refusal of life. We treat people and things the wrong way so habitually they usually reach us only to attack and kill us. Life is what fills me with passion, not its murderous abstraction.

A sudden shift of perspective and I see the attraction in some rock, or in someone's face, the feeling in the air, in the landscape, in a book or a sonata, in a basil sauce. Why persistently treat the world in a disembodied, hostile, uncaring way when the allure of possible pleasures has the privilege of throwing trade out because it is so defective?

The profitability of people and things, and the false contemplative freedom which goes with it, is opposed by the life in rock and plant and people slowly coming together, which power knows nothing of. When it eventually shakes loose, the economy and its client states will disappear; instead, a society will arise in which technical riches serve a wealth of individual desires. This is the collective struggle which commerce and its cripples refuse to see being drawn up against them.

The new sensibility heralds a radically different world, for sensual intelligence brings about the definitive end of work with all its separations. True spontaneity is your desires in

search of freedom: it will dissolve the age-old nightmare of economics and trading civilisation, with its banks, prisons, barracks, factories and deadly boredom. Soon we will construct our houses, bring back street life, and set winding paths through a nature reconciled to man. We will have foetal areas, adventure zones, houses which are inspired, others that move, other times where age has no meaning and reality no limits. We will invent micro-climates to vary according to mood, and forget the era when scientific bureaucracy was refining its weapons of meteorological destruction and ridiculing us as utopians. For spontaneity is innocence and can undo the past which is so horribly with us, where everything which kills is possible and everything which stimulates life is treated as mad.



## **Chapter 4. INTENSE PLEASURE MEANS AN END TO GUILT AND TO EVERY KIND OF REPRESSIVE SOCIETY**

### **1. Life is the unpardonable crime for which trading business exacts perpetual punishment.**

*What you restrain you always feel guilty about.* How can what you exchange be perfect? How can a society based on the reification of life not find the simple fact of being human flawed? Guilt is to the economic organisation of life what an insoluble debt is to the balance of payments.

From our ancient belief in divine punishment we have retained the machinery of suggestibility, and if there has been any progress in intellectual work through the slow erosion of that mythical *beyond*, which business no longer finds useful, there still remains a last prop from ideological theatre in the projector and screen which priests used to subjugate crowds. Intellectuality is caught in its own birdlime, guilt-ridden at being an unrepentant cheat.

Birth is the sin for which only death can atone. At the heart of all religions, this sin of origin has been gradually stripped bare by economic imperialism; we can now gaze at its raw flesh:

life, which power has not managed to ingest and dissolve, absolutely free unfettered pleasure. All the energy that men are forced to account for is totalised as work energy which has to be paid for until the end of economic time, when our disappearance from the scene will cancel the transaction and annul all outstanding debts.

While the self-destructive business process casts itself as progress to contrast with the barbarism of the past, penal rigours like torture and death sentences glow like contraband. The democratic law condemning them in the name of the rights of man is the same law that profits them by making people pay by installments. The old collective guilt of religious myth and the grand ideologies is as fragmented as society and leaves individuals to deal with it privately as though they had something to feel ashamed about.

This faculty for feeling guilty is the hidden persuader in a world where you pay for everything, where you even owe money on what maims and kills you, where they break your legs and sell you crutches. What woeful repercussions putting up with guilt has; it inhabits us as the intellectual function, as the duty towards incessant exchange, as the interiorised depreciation of the economy. Its oft repeated lessons teach us each day to dig the grave of regrets, with the pleasures that power and profit repress. To turn your back on guilt, or to destroy it only partially, to exorcise it, encourages it to return and encrust more thickly.

*Education is founded on fear of pleasure.* Nothing is more calculated to extinguish pleasure than your need to produce, be commercially viable, serve some purpose. Any constraint whatsoever, however mild, excites the faint-hearted fear of living and free existence. At this point the child's apprenticeship begins.

Didn't lies and dares, bullying and fighting, teach us to sharpen our wits and focus our brains? Aside from sensual experience where we each have to learn for ourselves, what pieces of knowledge can you think of which were not forced

I do not claim it wins without a fight. Naivety does not mean hoping that some magistrate, shopkeeper, flatfoot or killer will suddenly choose to have a good time rather than smash you to make up for his impotence. Expecting an adder not to bite is scarcely asking the impossible, but you do not automatically assume it.

Not a day goes by without my feeling aggressive or being provoked to a fight. Commerce attacks me by forcing me to pay and the bank by forcing me to count, while laws and authority deny my desires their liberty. However it is no longer a violent explosion of rage but the steadier violence by-passing them which will sweep laws, banks and commerce away.

With attractive ease as the most natural thing in the world, our common desire for autonomy will bring us together to stop paying, working, following orders, giving up what we want, growing old, feeling shame or familiarity with fear. We will act instead on the pulse of pleasure, and live in love and creativity.

Nature knows no other laws than those the economy has credited it with, full of animal cruelty and scourges of earth and sky. Those laws will be annulled throughout society as the will to live confronts your death reflexes and defeats them. The struggle against a hostile nature can now resolve into the help nature gives your pleasures *as a gift*, which is yours and rooted in life. This development of human civilisation is in fact its highest achievement.

Too bad if the taste for pleasure is a fine source of error. We will never make as many mistakes as the amount of blood spilled by intellectuals of past revolutions testifies to and which is etched on their hearts. I prefer spontaneous mistakes to truth imposed. Rather the creator feeling his way than the coherence of a leader.

The essential has been said. The important thing is to do it.

8 January 1979.

into you by threats or summons, blackmailing you to be virtuous in your own interest, your future, or your standing? How many poems have you memorised, how many rules absorbed; how many chronologies and theorems, craftily devised to direct you into obeying and giving orders, showing respect and scorn? What erudition, what lofty spirit — paid for at the price of punishment! What was knocked into me under threat remains hostile to me for ever.

Repressed desire is irradiated with terror, and glazes the most peaceable life with fright at every stirring of voluptuous feeling, or passion surging from the stomach as though out of the bowels of the earth, out of one's mother, out of the forest. Work treats the desires it represses into the night and dreams as evil spells. What is loveable becomes detestable. Life as sin provokes its dreadful outburst everywhere, delivering imagination over to the monsters of unacknowledged longing, the venom of phallic serpents poisons the bushes of these hollow dreams, and from maternal limbo issue ghosts, vampires, vaginal ghouls and castrating dragons which watch over the hell of sex, ever since the elite of the world upside down tricked it out in death's colours.

Horror, for the economy, is just an ordinary dream. It envelops sexuality and only reveals it to daylight when shorn of its night time damnation. In this way the seductiveness of life mingles with the anguish of feeling it suddenly turn its face towards death. And this is how envy, jealousy, resentment and vengeance manage so easily to push out pleasure.

Count apprenticeship to inverted pleasure among the principal services of the family and school. It guarantees the servility of the illness, of the director's office, police station, church, gaol. It is the smell of agony, the stench of survival.

A society based on the exploitation of life draws its energy from ever-present fear. That fear has started to be shared out democratically to make it bureaucratise "spontaneously", when it will beat in our hearts like the life pulse itself.

*Pain is the product of feeling at fault.* The Hebrew myth in which Adam and Eve were playing the game of the snake and the apple, condemned humankind to bear children in sorrow and eat bread by the sweat of their face. The cut-price reality of it now no longer makes anyone laugh; economic tyranny drags the living from their beds every day and whips them as they come down the production lines. No holy shroud can hide from us the wound inflicted on life; everything we touch is spattered with blood from it.

All suffering stems from this primeval aggression cynically presented as the result of *a fault we committed*. Education's only aim is to make children remember it, and, since no matter what we do, education marks us for life, the age-old resignation to death as our fate will soon give way to a deserving suicide on an easy conscience; and State bureaucracy will reap an even bigger profit.

But once a radically new society appears, which will ruin the economy and harmonise our desires, I maintain that the only real kind of suffering — the pain of self-destruction and the sorrow of having accepted death — will no longer exist. Instead of inflicting fits of anxiety on yourself, torturing yourself with visions of being abandoned, breaking your arm, having stomach-aches and kidney troubles, asthma or cancer, you need feel only the capricious absence of pleasure, unexpected sorrow, or the false slips made in exhaustion. These versions of sod's law add their own detours to the population better than legions of helmeted killers. Inside military uniforms there is sometimes a faint spark of life able to beam out through the robot, but the shiver of fear is worse than death, it is the ripple of life draining away. Everywhere power advances, where your prestige saunters, and authority confirms its presence, you can smell the musty odour of angst-ridden pleasures and guilty happiness. You recognise the whiff of the guts as they knot and relax, the specific sweat of hate, and contempt, of examinations and sinuous progress of desire; only the compulsions of power find

of? Let me be content just to gather what I like and weave it in to what makes me passionate. For passion has the eyes of pleasure, it sets everything on fire and reduces to ashes only what stands in the way of its desires.

I do not wish to deprive myself of anything — I cannot ever have enough. How could the old world ever satisfy me? In every social disturbance, in every riot, I get the chance on a much wider scale than my everyday life, further to smash what is tying freedom down. The life-line travels through subjective abundance, love without limits, setting fire to banks, sabotaging the economy, the end of the State and the root and branch destruction of business relationships.

I want to fight to be human, too human ever to be human enough.

*Life's best defence is utter freedom.* Pleasure unstinted is the ultimate weapon of individual emancipation. It is an irony of history that as commercial alienation reaches the brink, pleasure is in everyone's reach.

No intermediaries, no politicians, no agitators, no doctors, no popular champions, nor force outside ourselves — we shall mould history in accord with our desires and set necessity free.

You do not save yourself alone? I was never lost, but if my well-being depended on others rather than on myself I would quite truthfully never be saved. If we do not start with individual independence we will not end with any either. But if we do not agree to achieve it why bleat support for it in the first place?

Only yesterday we were stuck with suicidal outbreaks of rage, but each individual's struggle mutates as it goes through changes of outlook and perspective. Energy expended in the race for power and profit catches up with itself and laughs to see such a glut of joblessness, inflation, economic decay, breakdown of authority, revolution managed by those who know radicalism when they see it. So off goes energy down paths of enjoyment and immediate gratification.

conomic stranglehold through trickery, cheek or violence, who does not feel inclined to create himself, give birth to himself, and change his life from day to day. Creation lived daily as re-birth is simply the impulse to enjoy oneself gradually untying the straight-jacket of our repressed desires.

Our slightest moments have had death preached at them for so long that anything connected with preaching — inciting people to live, for a start — looks like death. I would like to be my own citadel, impregnable but open to those who increase its strength, and welcoming to the traveller en route to himself. The castles of autonomy will manage to bring down the authority of the State in ruins. “Desire’s wild horses will drink pure water from riverbanks of towns overrun with flowers”.

Universal self-management has no need of agitators, and can do without those conspirators whom the bureaucrats in power love denouncing everywhere simply because they see their own tyranny reassuringly reflected in them. It has no need of party or organisation. As for you corpses who claim to govern us, your suspicions of mysterious plots are vain as are your attacks on the instigators of the disorders; you wail in vain over a violence which only your presence perpetuates. Once again, the evidence will rub your nose in your impotence. In the street, on the very doorstep of your misgivings, individuals of the nascent autonomy are gradually emerging out of the poisoned fog of trade. They are ready to risk their nothing to gain everything, to strike where you least expect them, to answer only for themselves; the only mandate they carry is their subjectivity, and their footsteps are beginning to sound on the hollow boards of your death-stricken civilisation.

*The rotting history of the economy opens into the history of what individuals can be.* The backwardness of life vis-a-vis the will to live is due to the head still concealing the presence of a new style. I do not live the reversal of perspective enough, for my impatience causes me to wait for what is already within me. Why look where there is nothing for what there is plenty

malignant displeasure in confusing them with the joy of suicide, happiness in chains, or funeral feasts where death settles the bill, in full, for turning life on its head.

The imbecilic belief which sees suffering and the trials of life as an eternal defect is only belief in the eternity of business civilization. Holding that belief is why you continue merely to survive, economising on yourself just as the system economises on life, and putting up with a mean shabby existence in which, everyday, more and more miserably, the roles of honour, dignity, virtue, sacrifice, merit and their opposites interact and are exchanged. Your inhibiting reflex has got you so used to weakening your desire that there is no happiness which does not also nurse the fear of its being upset, nor success untroubled by thoughts of a backlash, nor joy which does not run after its sorrow as if the rain paid insurance on fine weather!

*Guilt stems from the fundamental lack of respect in exchange: you never give up enough of yourself.* That is why, everywhere and always, you are guilty. Guilty for not working, or for working, for being rich, being poor, having fun, not having fun, not bringing fun with you, for being successful, or failing to be, for living and for dying. Circumstances, your age, fashion, the why’s and wherefore’s, everything which tears the will to live from you in order to set you in power’s perspective, bounces you from one corner to the next, condemning and acquitting you.

The degree to which the libido is repressed in an era is measureable against the ravages of plague, the advance of cancer, collective suicide hysteria, which welcomes wars, massacres, crusades, nationalist, fascist and stalinesque ideology with open arms. The vast cheerless systems of thought now breaking up is what is preventing people offering themselves yet again as a holocaust to the power identified with their death wish; the suicidal urge has narrowed to the personal level at the service of work and boredom. As the economic

garrotte progressively tightens you get that taste of death in your mouth — what survival pleasures taste of: forced enjoyment, obligatory partying, and packaged happiness — the sort of thing they sell from door to door with the catch-phrase “amuse yourselves to death”.

Guilt haunts private misery like shame does, forever hungering for the bitter pleasure of destroying itself. Included in every destiny is the punishment for not being solvent enough, for not exchanging enough, for not being able to give up desire. Added to the permanent worry about paying your dues or not being paid for your trouble, death delivers the pay-off, a frozen orgasm of the body finally reduced to the completely rotten commodity. Death and guilt stare out of unavoidable exchange as if its glance would turn life to stone for escaping ownership by the economy.

What is astonishing if the development of medicine coincided with that of the bourgeoisie? It relieves and maintains the punitive value of illness, in the same way that priests maintained and alleviated collective guilt. It is only the rituals of sacrifice which have changed.

If torturers share with doctors the well-earned reputation of knowing most about the human body, it is because in practice, despite apparently irreconcilable aims, they both condemn the body by scorning the pleasures that the body enjoys. Their cult glorifies the vital mechanism as economic machinery. The body fitted for output is the victim-elect of a god of profit, and what we have been taught is that none can use it without tears.

Further, while pleasures turned into work succeed in weakening life to the benefit of thought, doctors look set to disappear along with priests since they both take part in economic progress and the making actual of the commodity. We hardly need mediators when everyone cultivates his roles and neuroses himself, and, in the pursuit of know-how and self-awareness, learns to conduct himself ‘autonomously’ as his own body’s doctor, torturer and economist.

I only am what I am by making myself so for my own pleasure. You are in such a hurry to explain me you want an autopsy. No one is more curious about me than I am. Perhaps your tender solicitude helps me to see more clearly, but I am the only person who can let light through the shadows.

Nothing pleases me more than to see people and passions harmonising in me and around me. I long for affinities which without rupturing link and separate again in accord with the capricious rhythm of desire, and which, in the freest possible way, escape the sombre manias of the will to power. And without the frustration reflex ever sinking its talons into me out of bitterness because someone I love is not there.

Everyone may keep his likes and dislikes, and what he agrees and disagrees with, to himself, or they can change them, I do not care, so long as luxuriance in life holds sway — and not death which sets a beacon on every separation. And if old inhibitions have formed one or other of my choices, do not oblige me to lift them. They have filled me with neither hate nor anxiety nor lack, emotions which your orders and incitements could well provoke.

Harmony outside an irreducible autonomy is not possible. O my will, grant me a multitude of desires and the pleasure of realising them all! And may revolution be ours as surely as it is mine.

### **3. Autonomy has only one imperative, which is to destroy every other one. Expansion of the self will foment the international revolution.**

*Individual realisation knows its limits and recognizes none. Reversing perspective dissipates the corrosive haze of work and constraint in everyone. There is nobody who escapes the eco-*

The complementary product opposes the absurd sound and fury of the world with its characterological humanist tolerance. This is like deciding the personalities of snails by their shells, the spontaneous admission that “I’m like that, it can’t be helped”. As if specificity could be confused with the particularity of *character*, which is the muscular straight-jacket developed by repressing desires and a vulgar holdall of roles.

Now that the history of trade reveals that it is the history of individual expansion inverted, are we going to recognise the specific nature of life’s desires and admit that each being is unique and irreducible by comparison, measurement or definition?

They are still waiting for you to show enough signs of individuality to be sold and enough uniformity to be saleable; so that, being nothing in yourself, you may fluctuate according to the vagaries of social supply and demand.

To live not as character dictates but in the exuberance of desire, what a terrifying prospect! If you are reckoned pleasant to be with, handsome and intelligent, do you live better? If opinion pronounces you idiotic, ugly and disgusting, do you live any worse? In the affirmative case you do have to worry about other people since you exist through them and belong to them, and need them to seduce, oppress, obey and flee yourself. Otherwise, let the prefabricated image of your good or bad reputation run about and fall to quarrelling. You will no longer need to lie to yourself when you no longer care what you appear to be, or strike a pose for the family and for history, or tremble in front of this reflection which is only your extraneous representation.

Does opinion run prisons and death-squads? When we begin to demolish the prisons inside us and destroy the killers of super-ego lying in ambush, the ones outside will fall like the Bastille. You arrive at totality only by having no more doubts.

The agony begins as the human is progressively reduced to business processes, and the will to live grows more anaemic. The vultures of guilt have never stooped so low, and the gloomy symphony — remember the repressed pederasty of the gregorian mode and the amorous impotence of romantic music — has never modulated so morbidly upon the wish to have done with it, once and for all.

And yet there is another song rising which will make us forget the guilty refrain and its master-singers. Innocence is like life: you only learn it in the arms of pleasure.

## **2. The world upside down reaches its point of possible reversal when the only way out of proletarianisation through guilt is either death or the preeminence of the new innocence.**

*One does not struggle against guilt by feeling guilty about it. What is not based on accomplishing life is based on the actualisation of bad conscience.* Exchange means striking a fair balance between the duty to judge and the right to be judged. You condemn class justice as though all justice did not involve class society. Appealing to fairness is only a demand for better decisions made by intellectual work, and surrender to the wisdom of a controlling agency.

Your justice is simply guilt balancing guilt, recognising only guilty and non-guilty, which interchange as times dictate. So what if a condemnation is swapped for a no grounds, if on balance it weighs more one side or another, when the sword obeys power’s flail! You must pay — that is the universal principle regulating exchange. Pay more or pay less, it matters little to me. I do not want these subtle calculations of reciprocal torts, in

positive and negative, merits and demerits, which in the end only express what's human withering as trade withers.

Judges and judged, what is your place in all this? Stealing, making love, emancipating oneself and having fun, which were prohibited, are now obligatory. Guilty yesterday for breaking the ban, here you are today guilty for not breaking it with enough energy and coherence. A host of populist bureaucrats is overrunning us claiming to reject exchange value but making us pay in cash or credit for what they love and hate, for their generosity and niggardliness, and their lucidity and stupidity.

Radical talk fills a great need to make up for the misery people live. Behind revolutionary communiqués, investigative hearings, ridiculous threats and lessons in virtue, lies so much impotence in pleasure, such a readiness to tax others for impotence and be themselves exonerated.

Concierges' gossip, things said at unhappy meals, theory outraged and complaining, and the splutterings of the spectacle's philosophers, are all grist to the mill of guilt. It belongs to whoever makes shame more shameful by attempting to whiten himself against the surrounding murk. A crowd of *state*-less prosecutors hang about waiting to make one good case from the spare parts of those whose guilt is second-hand. The trains, streets and cafés are packed and teeming with magistrates looking for the accused and the guilty in search of their judges. For these people who have been swilling in fecal guilt since childhood, the great art consists of remaining afloat in it while shoving those floating nearby under. That is humanity according to business civilisation.

The hangman you need for the job is never far away. A good friend will sell you if he is short of a few bob. This is what exchange justice teaches. The man at your elbow shouting for the end of the State will turn on you tomorrow because you didn't shout loud enough; the one who is struggling to survive will some day taunt you for having survived — you too. It is

is only a piece on power's chess-board. It is not a matter of going back into oneself but of going towards oneself without looking back. Whatever despair you manage to drive me to, I refuse to despair of life. Nothing satisfies me, and when your necessity presents itself as law, I feel only like overthrowing it. I have too many follies to excite me to be content with wisdom.

Desire lived intensely always materialises, and the wings of time bring round a day when one's thinking dissolves in spontaneous action. Not a thing alive lives alone when resolved to think for itself.

*Autonomy bases universal self-management on the harmonisation and emancipation of individual desires.* All power relations involve a contempt for self, a lack hastily compensated for, the inversion in which each of us sees himself from the outside.

Separation is to the death reflex what difference is to life. The greater the affirmation of each existence as an aggregate of specific desires, the more separation tends to be dissolved. Our era hardly gets it wrong: while people are reduced to the anonymity of objects and rigged out in an abstract individuality, we have never heard so much talk about specificity.

Intellectualised difference is the last separation in a world which has never tolerated difference when lived authentically. In this world the roles we assume to live through the day involve such a loss of life, such repression and so much frustration that the compensatory occasions to let off steam are compelled to reproduce and renew more and more rapidly all the old racism of politics, aesthetics, geography, eroticism and cooking, which, in a succession of fashions, condemn and rehabilitate Jew and black, red man, white man, the good, bad, beautiful and the ugly, the normal person and the freak. And the self-styled revolutionaries take good care to escape these classifications by having their exclusions and adherences, traitors and stars, reprimands, certificates for radicalism and people's prisons.



from intense pleasure. Finding himself exiled from his own life astonishes him less at first sight than being suddenly severed from what enslaved him. He had such a strong belief in his separation that being separated from that too kills him.

Have alienated individuals, strong in their communities of nations, political parties, armies and class, ever managed to steer history any better than the lonely idiot, except through the switchpoints of trade? What is the difference between men in a herd and men on their own if they are punished by the economy alike? And what does it matter being barred from a family which condemns one to exile from oneself?

The reversal of perspective opposes solitude by default with a solitude of abundance, a plenitude of desire, an increase in life and consciousness of it which is the very spontaneity of autonomy.

Solitude chosen rejects the world of solitude imposed. It teaches me to live, neither better nor worse than you, but *without comparisons*. To be born is to grant oneself the inalienable privilege of realising all one's life's desires. I learn to discover them by myself, to redeem them from their inverted form, and actualise them. I am learning not to repress a single one.

The idea that one has to make one's opinion triumph is the hallmark of economist conduct. Trade is always pulling the strings of competitive struggle. But returning to self makes a complete mockery of the victories gained by appearances. I have nothing to prove, I am no example to follow and I could not care less for your competition. May this at least keep from me the malady which threatens autonomy's first steps. Keep me from the disenchantment of the man who longs for an answering echo to his actions and who to the desert protests: "Is there no one among you intelligent enough to see what I am attempting, only the ridiculous fury of praise and censure?" For everything will be given to the one expecting nothing in return.

I wish to make myself proof against what harms me by becoming more and more aware of what I want. The ivory tower

in the order of things. I can see one, at the back there, who's feeling guilty!

What about junking this feeling of fault? Power's cynical clear conscience certainly rejects guilt, with the assurance the will to power gives. This is the arbitrariness of the tyrant, the "right" of the strongest to break the laws, the judge's pretension to judge without himself being judged. It really is the privilege of the pure commodity to be paid for without paying itself, to be exchange value without being use value.

Those declared not guilty sicken me as much as those resigned to it. The sort of truth which is always true only expresses economic reasoning.

The secret of authority, whatever it be, stems from the inflexible rigour with which it convinces people of their guilt. Guilty if you fail to understand some text or speech, some witticism or allusion, or miss that knowing wink. Crap!

I know what I'm talking about. I have sometimes caught myself at this imbecilic game, I know how much contempt to set as bait. It is not difficult to knock someone about if he is already in flight from himself and needs to measure himself against others. If I catch myself again setting out to trap you at your weak points, your faults and renunciations, I know I will only capture that idle excitation which drives you from servile ignorance to insolent savvy, from the disciple's humility to the mortuary of initiation, from contempt for yourself to contempt for others, and devotion to learning into hate for those who have learned — for you are never so snotty as when you discover others enjoying what you do not.

Someone who has made use of terror must choose to continue with it. Otherwise when he sees those he treated with so much disdain not flinch but turn on him, he will give himself away. How ridiculous both choices are! What bleak vistas for the will to power's little man: what he can stand least in other people is himself. With his muscles gone rigid with megalomania, he is a clear case of the corpse speaking plainer than the

living body. From that point on, with all the force of unreality, he has to ensure that he does not bungle his death if he is to strike a pose for history. He assigns others to the dustbin he thinks of as hell because he is so frightened of being relegated there himself.

I have often done the same myself! I now know that I became thoroughly proletarianised myself even though I vehemently rejected and denounced it in me and in others. But I feel as bored about guilt and making oneself feel guilty as about everything paid for and exchanged. Praise and reproof do not touch those who live through themselves, but those who exist through the esteem and scorn of others. I have absolutely nothing more to do with accusations and acquittals, or any other trial whatsoever. I have no interest in people who still want to play the righteous judge with me. I deny in advance all power and authority you might want to credit me with, that later you could use to justify your activities.

Is there no such thing as innocence? That need not stop us for we will invent it. You will recognize it in the transient ferocity of free existence.

### **3. History on the point of reversing goes through the reversal point of the individual's history .**

*The one thing worse than the worst mistake is the reproach attached to it.* The electrodes of commerce have been planted in every head, but is knowing it enough to disconnect them? I have little confidence in the restyling which rejection introduces. As I see it, only pleasure — and no reason to resist it, the will to live in expansion — finishes with fear's reflexes.

Time was when I blamed others for the guilt I felt. Then I kept a register of my hates and the scores I had to settle, keeping nothing back, souciant of every detail so that one day when

and self-denigration as if the forces for and against were equal and impotent.

But how irritating never to be able to lay hands on this self, say the others. Just when you think you have got him convinced, he side-slips. You cannot catch him, share confidences with him. With a distracted air he will agree with you, and then change his mind. But then of what interest are they to me, these shadows posted to catch me out in my desires, to register my profile, judge me, understand and govern me. But if what you are doing is satisfying your pleasure, you do not mind what I think about it. It will not alter your conviction that we do not have to know each other to recognise a common will.

*Intense pleasure in oneself is the basis for universal self-management and abolishes fault.* If the desire to be unhappy, beaten, oppressed, ruled, humiliated does exist, it is only the inversion of the desire to live happily, caressed, sovereign and free. Business imperialism is just the self dilated taken the wrong way and turned against it.

The curse that was drummed into us: "Alone you are powerless, without society you are nothing" is dead. We no longer agree that solitude is the same as moral banishment, rejection by the community, a rupture of the social contract, being the black sheep and the scape-goat. Outside the Church, political party, family, group and law, clan terrorism has again loudly declared that there is no salvation; we know that hope reserved for the flock is from now on less profitable than the spectacular despair of the excluded, the dissident, the heresiarch and the solitary.

The real sorrow of solitude, far from the feeling of being alone with oneself, comes from having to submit to the worst company, the interiorised presence of others, which is the law of the clan. How can one feel alone when still haunted by one's double as citizen, militant, leader, intellectual, repressed individual? Someone alienated knows solitude only from the dark side of himself, in the terror of attachment to what keeps him

met him, overwhelmed with work and overproduction, who comes on heavy with you before you get heavy with him, or makes you feel guilty so that you do not catch him out and who terrorises lest you should make him tremble. He is a man condemned to the lyric mode, stuck with greatness and humility, force and feebleness, success and failure; men like him feel obliged, quite gratuitously, to prove they are still 'alive'.

The authority an individual lays claim to corresponds to the number of humiliations experienced; his taste for power compensates for his inability to enjoy himself. Anyway, how can you enjoy yourself patronising people? That is work, every moment guarding against losing face, in case you lose your life. People like that richly deserve retirement to the bitter pleasures the old world's servants are given. The reward for virtue is disenchantment closing your account with a flash in the brain — the fleshpots you pay for are not worth it.

The small-time prosecutor you try to suppress jumps up in glee when brashly you declare that one *must* be autonomous. Have you not felt yet that your lack of autonomy, your inability to formulate and do what you think, is part and parcel with your continuous self-deprecation, with your self-programming that distorts you with effort, leads you to obey on command, comply with the needs of earning a living and meeting your obligations and promises, and respecting the proper channels?

How much easier to widen your vision and let yourself go, beyond caring what other people might or might not think of you, till you strike the old world out of your life in the same way as you have undertaken to hunt it out of its daily existence. When you let passion have its way you show more lucidity than any lessons on tactics or strategy could. Here is where you see most clearly that autonomy has nothing in common with the snobbery that says that you are to the extent that you own; nor with the sort of individualism which demands alienation like an inalienable right; with this cuckoo-in-the-nest self, at once greedy and exclusive, oscillating between megalomania

I got the chance I could repay myself for what it had cost me. Patiently I stacked my revenge in frustration's deep-freeze, in time-honoured style.

Until I understood that no one comes out entire from such a joyless pursuit and no one comes out of exchange alive. One gains instead the instincts of a notary, the foibles of a magistrate and the manners of a cop; one wriggles about in discomfort trying to find it a pleasure. Exactly how power wanted it.

I am fed up with that way of doing things. I like to stroke a cat without worrying about being clawed. I have finished with retaliation, that compensation paid to the will to live, straight economist behaviour. At so-called human relations based on nasty transgression and tight-fisted forgiveness, I laugh. The lawyers for the defence can bugger off too, with their copy-cat repetition that we are all fallible with a right to our errors. There is quite enough to do to live in the present without always having at a moment's notice to correct the past in it as well.

If I am not greatly concerned to weigh people up, see how they compare with others and judge them, it is not from fear of myself being weighed up, compared and judged, which is what the intellect, with its indelible streak of guilt likes to suggest. I wish simply to abolish a society in which people are a priori guilty of wanting to live and condemned through pleasure to sin, and from which only work can ransom them and kill them.

My inclination to pleasure keeps me from joining the politeness stakes, and floundering in contempt and what contempt defers to. Living a little is enough to strike the court of reciprocal merit and respective torts out of my daily existence. My pleasure is above justification, self-criticism and self-reproach, thank you.

*The new innocence is the will to live's self-defence.* All the violence we have ever experienced has come from exchange. Of intellectuality, default, separation, repression, of compensatory

binge. It is always fear which drives life to wear itself out in ill-tempered oscillation between aggression and frustration.

What senseless motive forces us to pay for goods produced by us all for us all, if it is not the fear of being surprised with our hand in the till and worked over by laws, punishments and prisons? If you are frightened of a copper you will stoop to anything.

Stolen goods are not actually free but billed on credit to the anxiety- and relief-from-anxiety account. They bring no more pleasure than sighing when frustrated, a revenge to soothe you and make the dominant system a little more bearable. The State gains almost as much from this sort of fun as from the Olympiads of the present day at which terrorists with characteristic defiance declare: 'Pay up if you want to live, and pay dearly. We are ready for it to cost our lives.' Marketing and exchange in this form is what has permitted trade to survive so long, precisely by changing its skin.

The ultimate absurdity has been reached now that we even feel guilty about feeling guilty, when we could on principle get rid of the very idea of error. It appears in the final analysis that the only fear ever to haunt us has been the fundamental fear of enjoying ourselves. The economy is so good at condemning happiness to the wheel of inconstant fortune that to appropriate it or be robbed of it would seem to break the wheel. At every throw of the dice of exchange, one loses oneself. What is not based on the emancipation of pleasure on realising all one's long and short-term desires reverts to the terror which always clings to pleasure like its price stamped in indelible ink.

One grows no more used to fear than to death. No life could dwell in such abjection. That is why I am careful not to inflict on you all the anxiety which you manage to impose on me. But do not fool yourselves! I do not dream of a gentle revolution. My passion runs to the violence of supersession, the ferocity of a life which renounces nothing; it is not the violence which leaps at you because it has been put on a leash and which jerks

ical to the life they wanted to live. Proletarians' low level of confidence in their ability to abolish the proletariat is simply the effect of intellectual work: every day you can watch it eating parts of your life away.

Thinking we can do nothing on our own has delivered us trussed into the clutches of the old world. But the moment we feel that state power cannot dam the rising flood of individual pleasures, each individual's determination will unite: and the dam will burst.

## **2. Our choice of society comes from each individual choosing between death and the unlimited expansion of our desire for life.**

*Creativity is the basis of generalised self-management and abolishes work and hierarchy.* If you live cut off from yourself and from others you probably lack all intelligence except commercial consciousness — what intelligence is for, a factory for capital to work in. But pleasure unstinted is a continuous link between individuals and the group; it will put an end to consumer goods, throughout that saturated empire's social and corporate existence.

I am beginning hesitantly to throw off the role assigned me by society, by myself and the machine crushing me. Bosses, the authorities, the stars of the show and fifty-seven other varieties of 'leaders of men' get greeted already with catcalls and laughs. But life is still caught and trapped in roles if you spit on hierarchy but persist in treating women as objects, denounce the spectacle but strut for your mates, put down passivity but nonetheless hide in your neurotic shell. The mobster who worries endlessly how he might end up a tramp makes power's daily charade an unflinching source of laughs. You must have

Intellectualism is a lie which strikes the individual whose life it turns into a series of images and ideas-smoke; and it strikes at society, whose culture it reduces to system. Avatars of proletarian emancipation know this running denunciation inside out. For in sacrificing their autonomy, haven't the proles paid twice over the odds? They gave up whatever life they had left to cling harder to their remnants of power — all those monkey-tricks the will to power has to offer, such as pater familias, the macho stance, militant hero, gang-leader. They confused the need to coordinate struggles with the idea of power, which means that a ruling faction gets to sacrifice everyone else. Over and over again. Busy choosing heads, the revolution leaves its body behind at factories and on barricades. Middlemen continue to operate efficiently at the expense of liberty.

People turn cruel when their will to live turns into will to power. The arts of enjoyment develop only unalloyed pleasure, whereas power feeds on the ceaseless frustration of false needs. Which is why cruelty is now the normal viciousness of the ordinary man.

Under bureaucracy the will to power manifests as string-pulling rivalries, underhand scheming by committee-men, machiavellism at the porters' lodge. In the new commercial societies the mirror, mirror on the wall shows whizz-kids with a few tricks, fishing in troubled water, and those with private schemes for survival, everywhere. So dies the spirit of a civilisation of travelling salesmen who take their wares wherever their wares take them.

While the petty nastinesses of survival maintain our illusion of living, the old workers' movement has collapsed and thrown us back on ourselves to confront us with a choice: either we fade out into intellectuality which is only will to power on its last legs, or we strengthen our will to live, and set pleasure free.

History is responding favourably to this nascent autonomy. It was never lack of organisation made revolution stumble but the inability of individuals to kick out any organisation inim-

back on itself, violence which gnaws its tail in rage like a dog tied to a chain.

If I am now sure that I will not pick up a weapon out of resentment or revenge, it is with the calm certainty that I will strike harder and more accurately if pleasure demands it. Fires of desire burn fiercer than torches of rage or despair.

The violence of gratuitousness does not economise on itself. If someone strikes me on my left cheek, I will smack him in the teeth sooner than offer him my right. Is not my enemy whoever constrains me, threatens me or makes me feel guilty? I want to live what I specifically am, without norms and without always watching for someone waiting for me at the corner of the street. If I kill what represses me, it will be inadvertently, as I stride out happily, without looking back.

There is more proud savagery in the person whom no pleasure can satisfy than in one who feels frustrated by everything and barks at the fun others have. The energy needed for super-session is to be found in the first, whereas the anger of the second perpetuates the impotence of a world where nothing changes. Instead of contenting ourselves with compensatory sprees, which is the suicide's homage to what is killing him, we will destroy the old world and offer nothing in its place. No barrier can stand up to the centred violence of irrepressible gratuity. Instead of taking advantage of laws framed to exploit us, we gradually substitute a practical innocence in which all legality is null and void. The time is near when no one will be presumed to know what the laws are at all.

We are at the far end of despair today because, having worn out everything that this society is based on, it is now draining us. We know that we cannot stop feeling guilt if we are told to without in turn setting it up as something to feel guilty about. In turning the tables and reversing perspective, the emancipation of pleasure takes itself as its only reference, refusing to be quantified, judged, compared to anything else or trapped. As long as it answers its sole need — to expand — terror slowly

evaporates and laughter succeeds fear. Bureaucrats and policemen will succumb more to a burst of laughter than to the bursting of bombs.

I no longer believe in the whip-lash effect of the hidden threat in happiness, the need to pay a deposit of defeat on love and insurrection. I try to live according to my desires, neither reining them in nor being ridden by them. If one wants something intensely enough it will always come to one. So why repress an apparently unrealisable desire, turn one's back on it, stifle it with compensations? Giving ends by breaking exchange. In that lies the new innocence.

If you really embrace your desires wholeheartedly, how can you not reverse the very polarity of the old world? Repression's calculations will get more and more inaccurate with each succeeding day, for the force of one's personal desires is a faceless thing, striking where and when it wants, and rather than trading punches it carries the advantage of being absolutely unpredictable.

This commercial society which adapts to terrorism and intellectual revolution of every kind will not, I maintain, withstand the guerillas of unlimited pleasure, creators of the new innocence, the people who could not care less if the kind of death awaiting them is one which the violence of life has not warned them against.

#### **4. The new innocence ensures that individual emancipation passes into collective emancipation.**

*The blaze of intense pleasure will utterly consume intellectual revolutions and their culpability.* The variant forms of jacobinism, leninism and national-socialism have been only translations of the terrorist methods of commercial self-destruction. Those same methods have survived the shattering of collective

If he asserts his individuality and irreducible subjectivity, it remains abstraction, the shadow exchange-value casts everywhere. The 'individual' of ideology has no substance to draw on except his inability to live, which does nothing either for the mythological power of the gods or for the real power of the State.

Most people in the pre-industrial era enjoyed a relative but real autonomy despite the social abstraction which denied them any. Under the bureaucratic and bourgeois class, however, we scarcely even have abstract autonomy which is the autonomous circulation of consumer goods waxing as life itself wanes.

Work has spread like a running sore all over the world. It has turned us all into its proletariat, and so everyone roots to become individual again. But the era of condottieres has passed. The Fascists, along with Stalin and other strident militants have shot the little men scuffling in the bottom drawers of their mediocrity for reasons to justify their identification with a people, a leader, or a cause. The economic reflex is so strongly developed that 'Important Matters' are now, as everyone knows very well, merely publicity stunts to pass off some State package deal.

When States function like monopolies and their bosses like shop assistants at the sales, what price will you give the will to power when that power is spread between so many million bureaucratic ants, each with his own ball of dung and each on the heap?

Even as a bauble dangled insolently before people's impotent nullity, it still cannot conceal what it has always been: life reduced to competitive economics. The law of the strongest and fittest ruling the world has not changed: it has simply evolved, like work, exchange and guilt, and become intellectualised. If shrewd intelligence is gradually superseding brute force it still retains the rationale of the strongest, for it expressed the tyranny of exchange value .

## Chapter 7. IF YOU WANT A CLASSLESS SOCIETY FREE YOURSELF

### 1. The will-to-power is the will-to-live upside-down.

*The individual discovered! On the brink of extinction!* The individual is the bourgeoisie's finest conquest: as inhuman conditions draw to a close we catch the first glimpse of a real humanity. Flowering into consciousness in the social euphoria which everywhere succeeded monolithic regimes, whether tribal, feudal, despotic or monarchic, see them now, lifted out of the spooky corners of religion and raised to the misery of the Enlightened Ones, as humble followers of the Tripone of Nazareth, the Tenia of Mecca and the Buddhist itch-mite Acarus. They've blown out the fart of God rumbling in their bellies and struck a more decorous pose, as citizen, producer, thinker, militant, as responsible prole.

That is how the abstract individual is born: out of the concretisation of commercialism, swept along by the currents of the time, and progressively excreted into materialism. With his head squeezed in the forceps of ideology, the ever-present separation between economics and life cuts to the bone. The compartmentalisation of his inner world reproduces the fragmentation of society, and illusions about his power here lifts him to the heaven of consumer goods. But his increasing proletarianisation shows him really to be in Hell.

ideologies and the individualised terrorism which seeks less and less to discover reasons and justifications for itself since it is becoming obvious that trade justifies everything.

The paradoxically-named "statesmen", who are just the State's inhuman clockwork, seem destined to fall to murderers armed with their logic. However sympathetic their assassins might appear by contrast, they are but the obverse side of the nationalised heads they topple. Power certainly counts fewer enemies among those who remain impotent by struggling against it than among those who have decided unreservedly to enjoy themselves. Whatever colours it wears, terrorism is just a moment of the withering of the State in the universal withering of humankind.

If the intellectual conduct of a revolution has always been expressed in military terms, and this according to an art of inducing men to be more efficient than they would otherwise have been, so individual terrorism also maintains the barrack-square mentality. Furthermore, it is not chance if the set-back experienced by urban guerillas coincides with the weariness that many feel at every day having to put on the guilt-inducing armour which puts them on a perpetual war-footing against themselves.

Life enjoys every right, beginning with the right to destroy whatever threatens it. If you love you do not punish, you blast any society condoning punishment. Why put up with a world in which the dialectic of goods for sale demands that pleasure become pain, caresses rape and liberty constraint? And how, in pain, through rape, or by constraint, can we put an end to it?

A wind of innocence is abroad; insistently it murmurs to us to stop working and be idle, to defenestrate a leader as a joke, to distribute the stock for love of having things free. If it blew any harder it would freeze the oppressive senility which labels, not the judge, policeman, serviceman or killer, but the exuberant life of desire as obscene.

There will be no more tribunals nor solitary confinement, people's prisons nor revolutionary prosecutors, model radicalism nor examples to follow once the feeling of impunity becomes collective and expresses the attraction that millions of people feel deep down for a society without punishment to fear, bills to honour, pleasures to pay for, and without power, frustration, submission, or castration.

All by itself, the new innocence will abolish every form of terror and terrorism.

need to go on looking for the revolution. I have got what it takes to find it in doing what it pleases me most to do. That is the direction I most want to go in.

Throw out mediation, begin your individual autonomy. You cannot accept substitutes for your desire: it lies at the centre of your subjectivity, and, in radiating out, dissolves the ancient carapace of character, that fortress which imprisons you with interiorised repression and diseased obsessions rather more frequently than it protects you from the enemy who prowls without. Sometimes it seems to me that only the haunted spite-ridden part of me attacks me from outside, and that I am quite capable of dealing with it.



returning to the common spring, to the fundamental unity of life, we hold as absolute certain that making primal utterly free activity [*gratuite*] dispenses forever with governing and being governed, punishing and being punished, violating and being violated, judging and being judged. In one single movement it abolishes the dialectics of death which rule over survival.

The pleasure of idleness and persistent application, meeting people and being alone, music, creation, speaking and remaining silent, laughing, shitting, coupling, crying, pissing, shouting, caressing, licking, ejaculating, leaping on someone, and rolling about, tasting, sniffing, touching, coming together and pulling apart, are not survival pleasures but the pleasures of life as you like to live it when you do not need anyone or anything else to complete your happiness. You join with the whirl of the senses when life is not overcast by premonition of death, unless it be at last a natural death and so distant that, as in the heart of ancient trees, it flows from the unconcerned forgetfulness of existence.

Separation has mostly reduced pleasure to the role of intermediary, as a vehicle towards something else. When instead of expressing joy in the body, dance is used to reduce and fascinate a prey, when caresses subordinate their game to the pre-programmed path of mating, the diversity of life disintegrates into products available if profitable.

I am not making pleasure into a road to revolution. Nor do I want to attack the impatience which has given you the excuse for not living, as though real life began only on the day after the ball. It is time that pleasure in itself sufficed, for its authenticity, unity and inexhaustible variety depends solely from the pleasure each of us takes in creating the life we carry within us.

But why go on contrasting the will to live where at least my destiny can escape, from what never ceases to rip it up? I root the emancipation of my pleasures here and now in the serene resolution to have done with commodity civilisation. I do not

## **Chapter 5. UNIVERSAL SELF-MANAGEMENT MEANS THE FREE REBIRTH OF THE CHILD REPRESSED IN EACH OF US**

### **1. The old world's death-struggle is rooted in our childhood desires.**

*The economy grabs people's childhood twice; once in their youth, and later, in what they repress as adults.* If the social development of life-desires gradually slowed down towards the end of the palaeolithic era, and the expansion of a sexuality creating the historical conditions which would favour it was halted, I cannot avoid the impression that the blockage goes on being reproduced in us from the moment each of us is born. Beyond genetic modification, the primary demands of food and movement have always, and still do, express the child's search for completely satisfying pleasure, a sure if tentative advance towards the primacy of every satisfaction. That is what the chopper the family wields comes down upon, and at that point that it mercilessly trims the child to a size suitable to take it quicker though its training, from desire withering to the aging we look forward to and call adulthood.

Childhood, like individuality, was discovered by the bourgeoisie by chance. The crumbling of the social community,

inherent in the capitalist mode of production, has brought men closer to their concrete reality. At the same time, it faces them with the old abstraction of the universal man which still governs them. How can generations of people assimilated en masse to a series of images refracted through the becoming of trade not end up gaining some sort of lucidity about alienation and the world upside-down? We have been held to be, successively, a Creature of the gods', a Man, a bourgeois or proletarian Citizen, and an Individual; is there any among us who does not want to demand his irreducible singularity, to wish to live on the basis of what he is?

The last phase of history we have all gone through revives in each of us the struggle of our first years of existence against economic repression. "Who are you?" those who control the answers demand, as the pigeon-holders and master-classifiers. One answer deals with the question; "I am what I wish to live, and I want to live out my desires in the unity of all that lives."

The economy's exploitation of all that is human uncovers the pleasure under the successive lies that constitute business verity. Ariadne's thread of desire always leads to childhood.

The interest shown by the bourgeoisie from the eighteenth century onwards for the child as an educable object already contains the more material interest it testifies to as marketable object to be haggled over. The cynical exploitation of the newborn child simultaneously throws light on what trade does and what the function of the family is when it operates through the years of our youth.

It all takes place as though the child which has suddenly been discovered at the bottom of the adult was exposing the condition of a civilisation which knows men as prematurely-aged embryos, *only to itself*. The absence of real life leads me back to the centre of a labyrinth, to the life which persists in me once the bitter taste of work, duty, compensation, fault and the will to power is exhausted. A child saved from the tumultuous

You hear people all too often weigh their words and pause for you to admire profundity. Desire, on the other hand, leaves everyone to work out his own way in silence. Independent of reason, desire is its own light and brings light to bear on others — quite unlike obligatory transparency, or the practice of self-criticism, or, worst of all lies, the truth *as represented*.

We want to live freely from now on with the knowledge gathered from the four winds, from the chance reading of wall-newspapers, and in the abundance of things written and sung, drawn or mimed by individual creativity finally free. The stolid front of education and information will break up in irresistible fantasies as creativity's desires and affinities get to work dismembering it. I put instability in place of feeling bloated and hunger for experience in place of possessiveness, expansiveness in place of self-distrust.

### 3. Pleasure creates life.

Very gradually we are emerging from the prehistory of desire. Pleasure as a pretext is like last rites for our alienation, and suicidal forms of pleasure the last Bastille of the world on its head. Now that we know prison walls us in everywhere, we can easily see how to blow it up from inside.

The Great Wall of goods-for-sale runs with cracks as far as it stretches out beyond life. Each day the crisis-ridden economy multiplies the number of breaches through which the urge to have the time of our lives will hurl us and bring the wall tumbling down.

We do not want forced, guilt-ridden pleasures anymore. We want no more pleasures severed from total sexuality, pleasures cut off from the omnipresent body of the will to live. Amorous embrace is eternal witness to life, in it distance and time are abolished, and because of it, because intense measures push the barriers set up against them steadily back, because we are

It is exactly the same with knowledge, for intellectual ignorance has unseated vulgar unconsciousness. As it marches along under the banner of progress obscurantism changes its skin. Knowing more and more things takes the place of getting to know one's desires. Integrating 'intelligently' into society, into the exchange system, adapting to the laws of the will to power, make up for a fathomless lack of self. Curiosity about this self can only feed on police-style interrogations. There is nothing human about the commodity system, though it wishes to discover all it can about humans, the better to bring them to heel. But its science, proceeding through autopsy and scalpel, discovers only the inert State of the corpse.

*What is freely taken from the store of plenty is always good, always an asset.* To put a price on people and things is to brand them with infamy: how much longer can we put up with it? Is it not doubly inhuman to feel impelled to hand over a fortune for a feast of fresh truffles as well as to run the absurd risk of paying for it with savage pains in the liver? Too much anxiety and letting off steam dominates even the simplest celebration. If love of life begins with refusing to pay for it, let us end up with giving as universal practice. Nothing short of liquidating the State and eradicating goods for sale will do. And I reckon it will come about less through the fury of the oppressed than from the irresistible urge to enjoyment, from pleasure's tendency to multiply and not hold back, from dreams and feasting, streets set with a million tables, a million exotic foods, while palaces and government buildings are transformed into vast wine cellars, cathedrals metamorphose into inns and road maps read as the menu.

Fuck it! Scepticism is just the traditional stodge of self-disgust. I gulp my freedom down in quarts and cordially invite you to burn up any red-herring doubts you have in high octane sexual excitement.

Nothing is passionately interesting if you are counting the pennies or feel forced to do it. Only desire teaches us to live.

waves of the past comes with me. His rebirth is the rebirth of my will to live.

## **2. Growing older is the process by which desire is proletarianised. The world on its head will only revert when the choice is simply death or the rebirth of the child in each of us.**

*In attempting to fulfil its needs, economics gives us back our childhood.* How can one feel settled in a world where birth is a trauma not a pleasure? The idea that labour is necessarily unhappy and painful is gradually disappearing. In place of the old saw about women being punished in the organ where they had sinned, people are beginning to think that giving birth can correspond to the pleasure of complete discharge in a climax of sensory outpouring. Why should intense pleasure be excluded from the child who leaps out if it is really longed for and fulfills desire?

Because the child is rarely wanted, and therefore he has to swallow his wants one by one. Because the way in to life is through the door of profit and power. Because the family conditions children to the money-making reflex, beginning with the mother who gives them birth.

All commercial civilisations, without exception, church their women after they have given birth, no doubt because the basically incestuous relationship of mother and new-born child brings the diabolical Beast of untrammelled pleasure into the stable of universal exchange value, and because the iron laws of economics are eager to set a curse on any growth of pleasure in the pleasure of giving birth, so as to invert it at root and, as it were, strike its fundament.

Each of our individual histories begins with the mother who brought us into the world. The woman who remembers the child she was — the child she ever is the moment she pleasures — is substituted in commercial civilisation by the mother, a virtual State official whose task is to integrate a piece of raw flesh into society.

Mother kills both the woman and the child. She kills the woman-child who lives in her. She is the commercial blanket power pulls over itself and under which century by century an hypocritical infanticide is played out and perpetuated. That is how the built-in bias of playing an eminently social role turns the act of lying-in into work. Once birth is reduced to production activity, is it so astonishing to see initial intense pleasure in a moment repressed, changed to grief, and turned into a curse?

*Work and pleasure are at loggerheads from birth.* The instant the ideology of maternity settles on a pregnant woman, the age-old torment of religion and culture tightens its screw once more. All the old notions of transgression and temptation, forbidden pleasures and falls from grace filter in and freeze the stomach, thighs and womb, contracting, hardening, fitting the intestinal armour and preventing both erogenous intensity in the woman and the child from springing out.

Everything in the body toils to barricade the road to freedom which the birth of a child threatens to blaze across the economic universe. But at the same time, the utter materiality and abstraction of trade reveals that alongside confinement-production, which identifies birth with a becoming which is purely economic, woman can assert her enjoyment and the child-to-be feels it; they celebrate their common mutation as if, in the birth of the one, there were reborn the *being* of desires which has never altogether hatched in the other. Because women, as less servile attendants on economic gods, escape profit-grubbing work ambitions more than men, they are seen by commercial society as the symbol of sexual life unbridled:

leaves you with only the householder's greed, guilty overindulgence and christian dissipation.

Nagging guilt force-feeds most people compensations and packaged pleasure, so that it seems obvious that excess of passion exhausts and kills. Bollocks! It is never excess which kills but what opposes excess. Beginning with guilt.

The undertaker preens himself as he follows the bon-viveur. A hungry trencherman in the twentieth century enters a restaurant in the same way as he goes to a brothel, with money, tissue paper, and a tranquiliser in his pocket. What pleasure you get from a meal where money has waxed the sauce and soured the wine, is caught in cholesterol and sharpened in bile, haunted by the spectre of a coronary! Gluttons and gourmets, exiled from the plate before you, there's death in the soup!

You pay for your pleasure-panic with disease. Disorders of the organism stem not from an exuberant life but from the panic-fears it awakens in spite of ourselves. The dread of happiness exceeds that of despair. Does it do any good to deny it when everything confirms it? A few passes of intellectual magic, the standard quackery of commercial abstraction, does not make it vanish.

How often these days do a bunch of boys and girls go off and enjoy the ephemeral pleasures of stuffing themselves with bacon soup, a capon or two, a fish stew, foaming beer, laughter and chilled wine, hugs and kisses and songs? That is gastronomy, the art of sophisticating peasant recipes, nature as invented by the economy, the stomach as paid for by thinkers.

Gastronomics call for both manual labourers and intellectuals. It sports MacDonal hamburger freaks and bottled-fruit hogs with season tickets to international chop-joints, as well as up-market baked-bean epicures and expense-account table props at gloomy boards, who stab sourly with critical forks. Robbed of their sexuality the pleasurable arts of eating and drinking lie only skin-deep.

*Economising on life has inoculated the pleasure of eating, drinking and knowledge with the virus of price.* In its economic puritanism the bourgeoisie declared that we had to eat to live rather than live to eat. The libertine reaction into which the overt despair of the bureaucracy leads us in no way alters the profitability of business when it incites us to live to eat. The previous exhortations to produce are adapted to the laws of what you can *consume at any price*.

Necessity taught the nineteenth century proletariat so well to work to feed themselves that its heirs are easily persuaded to cast out past misery through greed for fresh. Gorging oneself has become a labour of compensation and rejection. Lack of desire for life finds compensation in the race to fill oneself up — you guzzle wine, music, sensation, images, sex, canned fishballs, news, drugs and knowledge, but ultimately it remains a way of vomiting yourself up.

Exchange putrefies whatever it touches. Filling the coffers of the bank and the stomach and swelling with importance through every orifice is the 'insatiable being of the absolute', as revised and corrected by survival-based society. The taste of plenty transforms into the rage to possess, while the awareness of only ever possessing *things* drives absence of life into everyone. Fear of the void generates a ridiculous bustle which swallows everyday satisfactions, themselves no more than the thin dust fallen from orgies long ago and peasant festivals at which part of the harvest was thrown away, consumed, burned, cast in sacrifice to the impossible gratuity of it.

We have lost the excessiveness of the banquets of antiquity without getting rid of their inverted version, without ever rising from the table of the will to power, without spitting out the bone of contention between those who eat and those who are eaten. Tell me how eating, fucking and talking to prove what a man or woman or leader you are differs from working for a boss. Being surly and thinking the worst about everything

debauch, infidelity, trickery; Society's repressiveness leads to ingenious ways of enshrouding its sexual exuberance in a nimbus of clammy fog, the charms of that sex depicted in the colours of horrid caves and fathomless gulfs from which swarm multitudes of reptiles which the hero and saint has the job of hacking up. The myths and legends of centuries, necessarily irradiated by economics, show countless malefic representations of woman: Eve, Lilith, Pandora, Melusine, chthonic serpent, Medusa, sorceress, tentacle from hell, as many inversions of life as partial liberations can now let loose and set a value on the absurdity of the spectacle.

What we make only digs our graves; so mothers consign their own and their children's pleasures to the tomb, as unacceptable to the light of day, that is, as incompatible with economic reasoning and working hours. Pleasure is driven back into sexual night, into one's private abysses where monsters in the shape of ungovernable outbursts dwell, who rend in three child, man, and woman, which are but three moments of the individual united in intense pleasure.

When the child appears and upsets the family circle with his nascent desires, everyone's concern is how best to dominate him. In times past priests would have got hold of him and baptised him, thus cleansing him of impurity. Family education has retained the enema as a means of purging the child of his bent for gratuitous pleasure, and he is fed at regular hours so that the economy of time may better penetrate his skin. Who cares if baby on his back kicking his legs in the air shows how happy he is; more to the point is that he swiftly learn meaningful gestures, movements which appropriate things and profit him. And then that his little cries and babblings are eliminated to profit the functional language of supply and demand. What! Thirsty? Grizzle away, whine, wail and scream, nothing will come through kindness lest they 'spoil' you by allowing you to believe you can have fun without exchanging anything for it.

Psychology granted us fun in sexuality such a short time ago (in the same way that the Church once granted woman a soul, though she had only to invent one for herself), the child continues to be nothing in himself. Unspecified he remains, existing only in the family hierarchy, however made use of or otherwise represented! As a sign of wealth, as promise of future profitability, or proof of virility, a conduit for parental quarrels and reconciliations, as the cement and aggregate of habit, creativity substitute, possession, as domestic animal, as puppet or as mattress, the child is exchange value all the way.

What is a child? Nobody knows, for no-one has imagined what a being which has finally become human could develop into in a society based on emancipation and the actualisation of desire, on the potential every individual can fulfil.

*Birth, in a world which cannot tolerate it, is that change which contains all the others.* Parents, bitter because they cannot give birth to themselves, exist to thwart him who will. Civilisation waits between mother's thighs like the basket under an inefficient guillotine. Zonked on tranquilisers, the baby is eventually sent down the rolling mills of clenched muscles to be torn out by forceps, shocked with cold air and bright lights, and slapped, to encourage him to breathe the air of liberty. The child joyfully arrives.

I do not hope the element of risk and upheaval, violence or temporary vexation inherent in radical change will lose its edge or disappear altogether. But I do flare up when I see the welcome to life choosing in the same old way to punish mutation, fetter the human process, and interrupt the chain reaction of newly-formed pleasures. What good are techniques of gentle childbirth if the social environment is so weighted with some old man's hope that the young one will at least inherit his share of suffering?

In cutting your umbilical cord, they also give themselves the right to cut off your wings, balls, guts and clitoris. For your own good. In her slightest gesture the mother manages to apply the

However, the agonised state of passion present does not wake regret for passion past. Violence will break out as we reach the state of utter gratuitousness, not as we convulse in survival and slow death. When we stop looking for what is everywhere in quantity, distrust of our bodies *as source of all pleasure* will vanish in the same instant as society's disparaging attitude towards the individual.

To love others you must begin by loving yourself. Being touched and reaching out to touch and caress others is surely the start of any real communication: real human contact. Love's reason thumbs its nose at commodity rationale.

Joy breaks down separation, duty and exchange, and summons a world into existence through touch and feeling, music and scent. Do you not feel when you fall in love that you just do not care whether you are loved in return?

How could I hug or caress you were I waiting for you to touch me first? And in the tumult of pleasure who knows whose hand excites whose skin, whose lips, whose sex? Let us put an end to the jacobinism and terrorism of custom, coherence, standards of beauty and ugliness, these endless judgements rooted in our inability to enjoy each other. I like you! Let's get together. You don't like me? Plenty of others will have desires like mine. Why should you take offence and bitch at our lack of epidermic attraction? What is it makes someone I like better or worse than thousands of others? I answer for no-one, neither those I love nor have loved, nor those I do not like. Any society which will not promote *throughout* such a simple basis for itself deserves to fall apart under the complexity of its necroses.

Chance encounters occur when desire is sharp; blunted, chance invites light, acerbic liaisons and plays at being deeply in love. Out of a multiplicity of adventures the singular passion which will nourish all the others surely ought to be born; you only have to want it, not solicit for it. I will pass up no opportunity to attain my ends, beginning with revolution.

same way you have always cracked up the blessings of love in every one of its perverted forms.

Most of the incidents ranging from the silly to the dramatic which go to make up daily existence are love stories lived against the grain. Tenderness unspoken chokes in rage. Is it chance that sexually highly-repressed societies are noted for their predilection for death by hanging, as though the feminine sexual ring, source of life, were, by inversion, slipped about the neck and tightened to cause death? Caresses are stifled endlessly in a monotonous string of states of exhaustion and melancholy, in shocks, sectarianism, contempt, hate, assaults, murder. Morality's repression of paedophilia lies sprawled on vacant lots, young families whiten with shock at children assaulted and raped. The pleasure of putting your arms round someone and tangling amorously twists into the act of possessing a long-coveted object. The voluptuous delectation of embracing and love-making falls into sado-masochistic sacrifice in which knife, spike and gun, seduction and one-sided argument let loose pent-up exasperation at being unable to orgasm. And you get caught in the same demented zoology whether you come out against hunting, vivisection, cages and dog-handling schools, or the militants who fight them.

For humanisation of custom read humanisation of goods-for-sale. Far from showing a victory for life, the statistics of appeasement graph the progress of anaemia where a lessening of aggression expresses a lowered will-to-live pressure in the veins, and the passion for destruction gently simmers down into a predilection for sexual passion, enshrined forever for the wrong reasons.

Lucky things! soon love will exist only in your heads, lost everywhere else. Happy lovers! the day is coming when you will no longer have to settle the traditional scores set by jealousy, possessiveness and exchange; but, alas, it will only be because a desexualised society will have put discussions or ideas or techniques or images between lovers' warm bodies.

norms of castration foreseen by the economic system. She does not behave like a unique being but like an instrument of state or tribal power. Thereafter her role transfers easily to whoever educates the child. It may be the father, lover or child itself who covers up for his growing loss of humanity, but he is bound to identify with the images that like so many distorting mirrors our society burdens him with.

Scarcely has he escaped from the uterus, and despite the fact that birth promised to free him, here he is repressed in one matrix after another not one of which offers him a fraction of the advantages of the first. After the foetal stage he will never know gratuity again.

Tossed from the family into school, factory into State, from a group of friends into a political party, he embarks on his career among rulers or ruled and fluctuates up and down in the lift of social, financial, ideological and moral promotion. He takes the choice of declaring for one thing against another for liberty, though he is in fact linking the two and getting further from himself. The changeless world of exchange teaches him to learn to survive till he dies.

The death-struggle begins early. Right from the first few days when love, knowledge and the art of changing the world are sold to him at the cost of complete submission. There is nothing ambiguous about the blackmail: You want to go and develop on your own? Then give up hope of all help and protection! Or do you need tenderness and learning? Give up your desire for independence!

In buying the means to modify circumstance, the child merely becomes impotent to transform them in the direction of pleasure. What commercial society cannot tolerate is that his desires should run on from one satisfaction to the next, inventing a real life unimaginable in our dreams. The child therefore submits to the inhuman decanting of life-force into work-energy, to the law of perpetual exchange to the practical

impossibility of nurturing and increasing his desires. Birth needs to be recreated at the same time as society.

*Education introduces intellectual separation into the body.* The domestic state we call the family turns the child into a little angel whose head is *directed* towards the sky, the peaks, the élite, towards thought and power. The rest of the body with its cyclopean anal eye, is limited and firmly fixed to the earth, the lower regions and repressed world where everything drags its feet, grovels or hides.

Every time a woman turns into a mother and rebels at herself the better to resist the embraces of her child and her own inces- tuous desire, she teaches her body to grow numb, stifle what it feels and harden into a shell. Thought being thus invested with power of decision over the body, imposes itself as a distinct en- tity, which reproduces the social separation between manual and intellectual work. In this way the child is initiated simulta- neously into the curse on sex and into economic reasoning. For him his body becomes what he has to direct, restrain, dominate and civilise according to the laws of the power which governs fecality. His head then patiently teaches inauthenticity, to be ashamed of desire and to fear intense pleasure, which sends the self into exile and profits appearance.

You manufacture an infant prodigy in your image and model him upon that part of trade you have fenced off for yourself. How can you not see that under the intellectual progress he makes lies a lost Atlantis, ruins of a sensual intelligence re- pressed in times gone by? Most of the time, the child's un- derstanding that you praise is but his servile adaptation to the free trade in reward and punishment, promotion and downfall, power and submission. Ah, what fine perception it reveals to be so quick to exonerate and avenge, apportion guilt, hit people or fend off their blows, and which is so fine because everyone shares the same form of expiation, repressing themselves as creatures who desire in order to relax as creatures who think!

sense of smell draws the map of our sensual wealth on the obverse of the world upside down in rediscovering so many olfactive experiences repressed or undertaken as duties. Only dead desires stink, but pleasure in chains can put anybody off. As against the solemn oaths of interest and feelings under con- tract, may smell decide affinities and discord. Being able to feel for each other and feel at ease with each other will set up the variable atmospherics of situations even in the assemblies of universal self-management which are the social expression of our desires.

*There is no love where exchange and constraint rule.* Now that the two most ancient taboos in history are shown to be eco- nomic in character, can we finally admit that onanism is, to- gether with incest, the beginning of all authentic love?

Masturbation has been vilified for the primacy it accords to pleasure, which prevents woman from metamorphosing into mother and producing sinners. Bourgeois-bureaucratic ideolo- gies denounce it as the solitary vice which ruins health, reduces productivity, softens the rigours of intellectual work and turns you deaf to orders. The prosecution on behalf of the revolution follows hard on their heels, identifying onanism with want, iso- lation, inability to meet people, or at best low-intensity con- tacts that can never amount to anything. Definitely the old mole is working harder than ever!

*You reject proof in favour of misery.* You jeer at masturba- tion because you won't see in it anything more than a pitiful solitary wank. And all you see in incest is the occult core of the family, the web of indecent assault we all know about and suppress wherein each makes his bed, the shadowy passions caught up in family economics to stir in their relish of tender- ness, their dash of love and ferocity seasoning, into the more repellent communal brews of nation, group, party, or frater- nity. Your truth is ever the truth of the commodity. Tomorrow, with identical persuasive conviction, you will trumpet the need for onanism and ritual coupling with your mother, in just the



allowed to breathe through the crack of a reputation one has to dance to the bureaucratic tempo. You look down your nose, incorruptible, virtuous, but your glory comes from the rubbish dump and your reason in history is as good as mud. As general of an army of dustbins, you taint everything you touch with the stench of what has gone dead in you – the smell of trade clinging to all circles of artistic exorcism.

*When you are feeling fine, you feel how free life is.* Whatever is alive always feels good. I dream that all the senses reunite and each organ evolves endlessly through analogy with the way all satisfaction operates. As if – the lungs excited by contact with air, being penetrated by it and expressing it in muscular detumescence through nose and mouth – it were in a sexual mode which sexualises them all that smells take me over and emanate from me; as if the functions of the body now finally diverted to benefit pleasure, gave way to the rhythm of tension and satisfaction which is how the desires for life progress.

From the child repressed at the age when he learns what secret urges smell like, when his nose is at the height of fly-buttons and the bottoms of shorts, we have retained something of the original liberty which developed our sense of smell. Is there anyone who does not like to sniff his finger after he has touched his sex, slipped it in his anus or rubbed his armpit? The idleness of the gesture opens the door to childish feelings huddled in the depths of us. And do we not long for this child to be born again in the lover, and adult who in the quick of passion discovers the charm of natural emanations, called natural because education has done its very best to denature them!

Few people breathe with the love of self. We should take our cue from lovers who drink each other's saliva, lick each other's sweat, and drop for drop sip cyprine and sperm. They utterly give up worrying whether other people think they smell saintly or sulphurous.

If one learned to smell again as an intellectual decision, it would only renew the age-old castration of the senses. Our

Where trade on its outer fringes weakens in its aim of appropriating life, it corners and identifies what is countering it: today we know that the foetus's movements in the womb are expressing desires they satisfy. Far from showing blind behaviour they are waking a kind of indistinct attentiveness, an understanding of what stirs them up in their relationship with their mother.

As the child is born and plunges into a wave of sound, touching and lights, does he not bodily set about exploring the unknown land? Form his senses of feeling, smell, hearing and sight by recoiling and expanding again to distinguish what is hostile or pleasant in the atmosphere and moment?

Each time the child avoids cold, boredom, loneliness and brutality, and looks for the lap where he can find caresses, his intelligence develops, progressing as an inseparable part of the body. As it grows it joins in sharpening the senses on the paths of pleasure.

Although economic reasoning allows him little acumen, the child knows enough to do what he needs to satisfy his desires. Have adults never dreamed of perfecting this knowledge? Quite the opposite, they have turned it on its head by separating it from their sexual instinct and transforming it into thought foreign to desire, which leaves pleasure foreign to life.

Intellectual hypertrophy is actually the head rotting because of commercial evolution. The contrary is true of clear thinking which is born in the slipstream of the will to live and refined as one pleasure succeeds another, but dies of abstraction when it inverts in letting off steam, in being constrained, remaining separate or feeling guilty. The repressed childhood in each of us demands to be understood afresh if we are to supersede and actualise it.

As surely as economic power produces intellectuality by depriving desires of their means of feeling and by turning feeling against desire, universal self-management will push intellectu-

ality to the end of its self-destructive course, beyond its old man's aches and pains and its puerile booze-ups, until it dissolves and a total sexuality emerges.

*You pay for the mistake of being born by turning your back on life.* The child is the most stunted of innocents. The title of an old novel could serve for his personal story: the child of sin. Theology was not mistaken when it described birth as a neurotic hell in which the human animal is born between piss and shit; the god of the intellect becomes purer the more he disgusts people with the body.

But no one denies, though he sometimes pretends otherwise, the satisfaction it gives him to piss and shit every day. But this is how, for the woman in labour, the shame of expelling the child like one empties oneself of urine and excrement, gives rise to repulsion which manages to turn the possible agreeableness of birth into a nightmare. If you are ashamed of yourself then the lack of constraint in pleasure becomes a liberty to be paid for with a greater sense of shame; this lesson is knocked into the child in the first hour.

How could the child — responsible for the pains of childbirth, a cumbersome pregnancy, his mother's repressed incestuous pleasure, his parents' guilty conscience, and for stirring up the couple's dirty water — not be educated into guilt by guilt? The hygiene of economic reasoning demands that he be punished if he cries, dribbles or dirties himself. He has only to leave his mother's side and fall over for her to sing out "look what happens when you go off on your own", while the family bawls variations on the theme "it's your own fault!"

The child learns to hate others and hate himself when his mother teaches him to forget how to love. Everywhere and always, the taboo on incest between mother and child forbids the intense pleasure of the foetal stage being prolonged, free with each other in their feelings after birth. The source of all affection lies in the initial incestuous relationship, and repressing it

the self hunches the torso and controls the affects; the will to power consolidates the muscular armour. Breathing becomes something done by the head, another element of the cerebral system. It imposes on the body the survival cadence of the beast at bay, aware that death is set to catch it with minimum trouble and no pleasure.

The air in business is stifling. Anxiety is the simplest expression of this social asphyxiation. Day after day the throat tightens, only allowing libidinal exhalation to escape in spasmodic mouthfuls. Is not the child being taught, when his body is on the defensive through throat and nose ailments, about the act of penetration by power and money which the family is allowed to perpetrate on him in legal rape?

The old world which is sucking the air out of us is evidently at the same time the world of pure and dizzying heights. With one hand it opens up the throat it is strangling with the other. Artificial lungs are generously put in circulation because of sport, work, gymnastics, cures, drugs, stimulants, tranquilisers, psychiatrists, anti-psychiatrists, religions, relaxation, tourism. The oppressiveness of the cities is met with the epic age of the great out-doors, being strangled by society by the escape from it: the hanged man is granted a double length of rope. The countryside oxygenates the body before sending it back to rot on the dung-heaps of the city and in the deserts of boredom. Ecology and pollution meet in the same lobby after the trial, leftist sweat mixing with bureaucratic formalin.

The rotten smells which sudden bursts of rage, hatred and contempt bring on blend well in the polluted atmosphere of business. In this unbreathable society the law grants us all the consolation that *no-one can stand himself*. How the miserable little whiners multiply! While the power-mad dog howls down all compromise and makes a radical ass of himself to hear the roar of fame, the frog in the revolutionary stoup swells with bile, eager to play the bull of theory on the common [*champ libre* — french publishers of radical theory] of business. To be

ing death. That radiant motion I want to pursue into sleep, the moment when the body dissolves the landscape into multiple dreams which we are now learning — and are you aware of it — to prolong consciously upon waking up.

Bitterness has poked its bones through and split aesthetics' final skin. Beauty and ugliness you have never judged except by default. The shadow of death repels me, only life makes me passionate. Love gives me the clarity to see people, and things filled with hate and the urge to consume merge in the same forbidding grey. What I see through the eyes of pleasure ends up by destroying what profit obliges me to see.

*Robbed of sexuality your nose is just an appendage to your lungs, a physiological forge which gives the body not the fire of life but its power of output.* Contemptuous of work, the aristocratic regime left the body its natural smells which in the vigour of its passions blended well with wild scents. Under the rule of the factory, hygiene scrubs all living matter off the body, and cleanliness and the morbid shame it engenders deodorises air, armpits and kitchen even as pollution eats away the earth, the sea and the sky. The body is never done with washing in the filthy waters of profit.

The sense of smell teaches one to be ashamed of smells. Under the classificatory system imposed on it by those themselves repressed, the sense of smell gradually declines as it learns to distinguish between good and bad smells, those of saintliness and those of sexual pleasure. In the past, guilt struck at the perfume of desire only when amorously erectile, but now it attacks anything which looks likely to snarl up the lungs' work of creating energy. The sense of smell is shut off to whatever is not respiratory function. For the less familiar respiration is with how it breathes in intense pleasure, the more easily it can renounce the feeling of plenitude, adopt the fitful, jerky rhythm of effort, and economise on itself.

It is in the family that we learn to paralyse the thoractic cage, to block the impulses rising from the abdomen. Mastering

makes it the source of cruelty, suffocation, appropriation and want.

The more functioning as mother repressed woman as lover, the more the child becomes the sole object of her resentment. She clutches him to her breast like some ancient grudge. Should he arouse desire in her by nibbling her breasts she looks in excuse for an economic prop, poses as the wet-nurse, separates eating and drinking into two distinct actions and blithely snaps a single unity of pleasure to accord with the law of work.

Suppose the child gets excited when his mother is washing him so that they both feel the first shiverings of pleasure. Her hand will instantly disown this loving temptation and complete its hygienic labour with mechanical dryness. None the less, the pleasure does not appear in the practical gesture. It persists in its opposite form, changed in direction and charged with anxiety, culpability, aggression. The desire to caress is turned into a desire to scratch, maul and murder.

When economic reason gets hold of the body, it strips it for work, untangling what belongs to the feeding and educational machine from what merits suppression as being in no way remunerative. Caught in the traumatising see-saw of loving demonstrativeness and hate-inspired stiffness, the child continues to suffer sweet caresses while neurotically reprimanded and repressed. His awakening to total sexuality occurs amid what splits, fragments and inverts it.

Every time a rebuke follows a gentle look and loving signifies punishment, the child learns that the head is where the body takes refuge. He learns to situate it at the same height as an obsequious greeting and the scorn which compensates it. His mastery of himself is merely his servile submission to every alienation. That is why each of us, man or woman, is determined sooner or later to act as mother of real or imaginary children, mother of nastiness by way of compensation, mother of atonement, and of regiments and political parties, who reproduces — most of the time as the ridiculous counterfeit of Father

— exactly the same wretched and sentimental, tribal, national, political, erotic, ideological or revolutionary family. Putting an end to the maternal function is simply a visible form of the end of work, constraint, intellectuality and the propensity for guilt.

### **3. History on the point of being reversed passes through the point where it reverses in the individual's history.**

*Autoanalysis is to psychoanalysis what actualisation by individuals is to their integration into business.* The only childhood I care about is the one I lived through and which goes on living in me. For nowadays growing older has taken on the precise sense of progressive integration into the old world, while returning to childhood signifies the rejection of increasing proletarianisation. Isn't where the repression exercised over the child joins the exploitation of the proletarian the point where personal and collective history meet?

The confusion long maintained between the ideology of childhood and the millenarian beliefs of right and left, will be wiped out anyway in the impudent mortuary of the economy. The naked materiality of business effectively opens everyone's eyes, its crude mechanism operates openly, and each of its movements liberates a part of humanity which it anticipates recuperating at the following stage, in the contradictory and permanent progress towards its self-destruction.

If a revolutionary in the nineteenth century needed thirty years to understand that his projects for liberty held worse things than the previous repression, three now suffice our contemporary, the man without quality, so much does every day excessively demonstrate how everything missing from the total emancipation of our desires works to renew business.

The return of the child appears in the wake of two moribund ideologies, feminism and psychoanalysis, two partial demands

child who gazes on his mother's sex is struck blind. The stories told in modern education go one better: by all means stare at your mother's cunt but don't enjoy it. Thought stares and no longer lives in experience.

And that look is also the reflection of a basic failing. Most people survive, ashamed of being seen, too nervous to be recognised. The inquisitorial eye can only capture life in its roles and changes of role, as image, dead flesh thrown on the scales of commercial criteria. As credulous victims of power's voodoo, you have no right to sneer from the pinnacle of your sophistication at so-called primitive men who do not like having their photograph taken in case their effigy fall into hostile hands!

*The tactile gaze of intense pleasure meets only what is alive in people and things.* What do I care for a glance which is stolen and returned, which is posed, weighed and sold, which measures and compares, hunts for distraction, is exchanged? Like the other senses, sight is part of the universe of feeling born with the infant, which the economy then hacks to pieces. When pleasure represses itself it is not looking to lively itself up.

The disturbingly deep gaze of lovers, which you find again in dreams and wonder (the sun we see doubled in snow-covered landscapes), is indelibly marked with sensual delirium — how everything will one day be. However reduced in order to function economically, the eye shies away from the unvarying vistas of business perspective and scrambles power's geometry of high and low, left, right, near, far, length of time, place. When the eye opens in the insatiable excitement of intense pleasure the oculists of everyday profitability say the look is vague, distracted, lost; it certainly is utterly lost on them, as it has no wish to see them and escapes to where they cannot study it.

It is not the dissolution of the self, nor drugs, nor illumination which opens the eyelids and lashes prehensile with desire, but the lucidity recovered by the senses in freedom. The silky look of the jelly-fish envelops the world through suction, always moving towards feeding itself with life and to dissolv-

## 2. When you tire of survival's amusements you will want to reverse perspective.

The eye of power destroys what it gazes on. Education adjusts us to collineate with the economy. Prodded by work, needed by constraint, our gaze unravels the thread to the hierarchic labyrinth, learning the no-entry and no-stopping signs, and taught to tell far off the beacon lights of authority and profit. The eye mirrors goods for sale .

Consider the desire to reach out and enjoy something: how often is it inverted into a furious desire to capture and possess? And just as the fact of possession substitutes for intense pleasure, the laws protecting private property replace what you are not allowed to have with image ownership. Seeing is possessing by proxy, greedy to rape and rob. Should the person wanting an object, get his hands on it, his eyes will be cheated of pleasure again, which is the price of victories won by the will to power.

The twin threshold of repression and uncontrollable outburst perceives no landscape other than life inverted. The wish to catch hold and caress turns into a taste for capturing, killing, annihilating. When you play the game, aiming a pretend weapon at the sparrowhawk high in the sky or at the village emerging from the mists, isn't your solicitude for destroying everything you see translated by horribly mutating the desire to be everywhere into the compulsive need to own everything?

We have borne the evil eye since we first began mummifying humans and cats, transforming them into dead objects, pieces of property, goods to sell. They remind us of the curse upon us and provoke us to destroy them and join them in a common nothingness.

We have only the eyes in our heads left. With our intellect we scan the labyrinths of inauthentic life. In the old story a

which were born in the shadow of proletarian emancipation and whose simple presence denounces how equally piecemeal both the anarchist movement and the workers' councils are.

At the occult centre of what the feminists require is the setting free of woman as lover. This stifles right-away both the matriarchal project and the amazons launched at the competitive conquest of economic power cornered by males. Sharing with the producers a contempt for the child's low level of productivity, feminists retain their glorious future of hoping for equality through work, of extending their domestic authority as 'mothers' (with or without a child) to their entire social activity, of being one day completely the boss, the navy, the cop, militant or soldier. A fine objective!

The workers' movement, feminism and psychoanalysis are characterised by the same intellectual defect. All three are initially responses to a desire for authenticity, firmly for life against its falsified forms, and each separates and inverts into a new oppression, which is the old one they have updated. Thus psychoanalysis sets off to look for the child repressed in the adult, but by mistakenly attributing the cause of such repression to the economy, it soon returns what it fishes back from life iced over with power and profit as fodder for the economy.

Psychoanalysis thus diffuses and reproduces all the tics of former alienation. When it shows that thought censors the way desires are expressed, does it by so doing cease to be also separate thought, counter-censorship dissimulating the split between body and 'head', emancipation imprisoned in the relationship between master and slave, liberation caught in the trap of initiator and candidate?

Thanks to psychoanalysis, the transformation of sensual intelligence into intellectual function reaches its peak of unconscious perfection. It teaches one to change one's neurosis, to adapt the unbearable malaise of private survival into the social

norms of universal survival. What a fine reason for knowing why you hate your father, if you go on working for a boss!

Regulating in- and outlet valves have long more or less balanced the pressure from repression and relief from it, but nonetheless one way of alleviating tension through negative or positive transference becomes impossible as business humanises by gaining possession of human beings. Societies highly permeated by business no longer allow people to compensate for lack of life by lynching, massacring minorities, official racism, or the glorification and desecration of a leader.

Economist behaviour nowadays prefers self-destruction brotherhoods, clubs in which the contemptible can practice contempt, societies in which everyone passes judgement on each other. Psychoanalysis is the washing powder the purveyors of family dirty linen refuse to do without. It personalises the exchange system by selling the good conscience of its afflictions direct to the patient, (and it sells at the just price of its integration into business society). Its doctrine of health, which rests upon the ambiguity of desires accepted and negated, in fact reproduces the morbid relationship of mother and child. A quick pirouette well adapted to the order of things winds up the balance sheet of troubles and their remedies: the child-slave kills the maternal master in that he kills him symbolically by fulfilling the honorary duties of the consultation! *Ite missa est.*

There is now a clear choice posited between getting beyond childhood or letting it rot within us, to live its flowering or to trample on it with the destructive attitude in extremis which cuts off its nose to spite its face, and which is the incomplete man to perfection. The intellectual function, whose shadow has always clouded the consciousness of intellectual *history* feels obliged to leave this history to express itself against the intellect. What was hostile to me deserts and joins my life-force. Like many others, do I not conspicuously exemplify an alchemy whose *materia prima* is within? My desires, caprices,

yourself when death is so close and you can merely survive almost as an excuse?

Dreams of apocalypse haunt commercial society's subconscious. It is only the idea of sudden destruction which has allowed it to put up with itself and go on gazing at its reflection growing more and more gangrenous. Millenarians and suicidal revolutionaries with their vengeful despair were society's suppressed bad conscience breaking out until survivalism spilled its air-conditioned nightmare over us and gave us slow-motion suicide, itself utterly poisonous as the sheer weight of things will stifle us anyway.

While acts of criminality and terrorism with their watered-down look-alikes express the spasm of a morbose will to power, a longing for the funerary feast which would swallow the whole world sidles into the waiting room. While we wait pleasure serves to pass the time. Memories of a life upside-down which occasionally contracts violently and snuffs us are being replaced by a gentler fatality: epicureanism on the installment plan, whose every characteristic shoves what is human in us deeper into the commercial freezer.

I refuse to choose between two kinds of death. My guiding light is life lived to the full.

When the senses themselves are reduced from biological to economic organs, the ultimate degradation, pleasures turn up both their inverted millenarian face and their absolutely irreducible rebellious core which cannot be recuperated and commercialised. At this point, proletarianisation collapses behind us. Natural feelings slowly reawake in us as desire nourishes the organ that feels it. You need neither guidelines nor laws to enjoy life. Whatever defines or confines it, or causes it to specialise is precisely what relegates and inverts it: work, constraint, exchange, separation, guilt.

## Chapter 6. UNIVERSAL SELF-MANAGEMENT WILL SEE THE END OF INVERTED PLEASURE

### 1. We live most of our pleasures under the sign of their fatal inversion.

*Passion itself has grown so feeble that repressed life has almost lost its self-destructive urge.* The pleasures of bygone days were so much more violent than our own are because, however fucked-up, the will to live was then much more red-blooded. Excited by the myths surrounding power and restless in capitalism's ideological inventions, the will to power has long been siphoning energy from sexual excitement to turn life towards hate and death.

The break-up of hierarchy together with the endless pin-pricks of commerce are exhausting in individuals and societies alike that aggressive energy common to kings and tinpot gods, tribunes, viziers, war lords, patriotic loyalists and cunning brutes of that kind. These days the will to power wilts in offices and in the family bosom, in dormitories, barracks and central committees; we could rejoice if that power now in the hands of half-wits were not also a half-witted power, revealing how the will to live itself has become so feeble. If in the next trade-based society, men stop murdering each other, it will only be because they are too weak to do so. And why kill

passions, moods, fantasies, dreams, inhibitions, neuroses, illnesses, plans, whims, stupidities, errors, genius, what distinguishes me, are these not precisely the spring from which I wish the river of my life irresistibly to flow?

Self-analysis follows on the heels of autonomy, marked with the same resolve and uncertainties. The tighter the corner into which proletarianisation squeezes life, the more our senses are excited like a fire in the roof of economic reflexes. We cannot live our pleasure authentically until all the pleasures trapped and crusted over with business are free. Clear-sightedness is as part of desire as desire is of specific individual personality. There are already too many strangers in me without my allowing one more in because he claims he will chase the others out.

Self-analysis which likes to think of itself as psychoanalysis without an analyst is just the self's traditional police-style lecture. If you subject yourself to someone else's inspection and swallow the hook of objective explanation, examine your being the way others see you (the way you let off steam, where you stand in the pecking order, how you settle scores), you are giving up the clear-headedness of desires that know no master. How can a person open up to the healthy pounding of the will to live if he feels compelled to analyse himself and is terrified of finding himself, anxious and guilt-ridden and desperate to justify himself?

I refuse to hide that part of the old world from me that continues to exist in me and governs through inertia. On the contrary, from this congealed lump of inhibited and inverted desires I claim to set free the daemon of marvels who let himself be trapped there. The oppressed world of intense pleasure is in me as it was in the child I was and which inseparably I am. What I dissimulate rears its head everywhere I would not wish to see it. Toying with a bracelet, the 'migraine' brought on by 'bad' thoughts, sighing over what you could not manage, the tachycardia of repression speaks the language of the body ambiguous, torn between desire and all that forbids it, pulled

between the pulsations of life and the literal expression of captivately banal phrases: “my stomach turned over, sick at heart, I had a load on my back, gave myself a ball-breaker, sick to the back teeth with it...”

What repels me, terrorises or humiliates me, or makes me suffer, contains what I love and desire, inverted. I restrain myself less when I explore myself than when I confide in myself. The more my curiosity encounters resistance the more it persuades me to go on. Where the block is the wall of repression rises. I like to return to where the suppression is anchored, ferret about and dig using associations, analogies, fugitive images, dream phantoms. Why should I not go right to the limit, why content myself with hasty interpretations, transferences, alibis? Am I not to discover my hidden truths by myself?

With the creative inspiration intense pleasure gives, I want to learn to hunt out the priest and the flatfoot lurking in the crannies of my head. For it seems to me that he who is no longer blind to the way his motility reverses when the will to live converts to death reflex holds revolution’s absolute weapon.

Once, we worked out how to decipher the book of society. Today, anyone with a taste for immediate emancipation finds himself faced with having to decode himself. Pain, analysed until it spits out the pus of guilt, gradually disappears, showing how tissue scars over, the chest muscles relax, and the desire whose repression was the cause of the suffering is liberated. It is the same with every sickness, every somatisation, every dis-ease.

We have all thought fit until now to treat ourselves with cures worse than the hurt, because we chose not the will to live as our foundation but what weakened it. It will not take us long to perceive how the vital organs interplay and come to avoid what inhibits them, to free them from the economy and return them unconfined to pleasure. The phrase “Chance is you happening to yourself” will be applied by us with increasing accuracy, so that in sifting the parts of life from death stemming

from us and approaching us the fortuitous will occur only in intense pleasure’s variety.

To turn the world upside-down the right way up is to take the shortest route between one happiness and the next.

#### **4. Our desires coming to life again herald the birth of a society which has eventually become human.**

Desires aroused in childhood lack the means to alter the world in their favour. The history of our times offers us the means, but turned against us. But if we are reborn to ourselves we can turn them on this history.

Sensual relationships are built up in the creation of a radically different society, and the process is irreversible. There are more people brandishing childhood’s weapons that they have rediscovered in themselves than the old world suicides believe. The latter are always quick to deride the new innocence as a collective folly whose demands are childish, although with methods very different to the old world’s, this ‘folly’ has begun to wipe out the world which bores us.

I long for the juncture where the child is no longer the object of knowledge but the subject of loving passion. To adventure erotically with children is inseparable from loving oneself and loving life. You need not doubt that it will spread in defiance of your laws, garbage which has never conceived of anything but infanticide.

The search for our desires is not archaeology into the past but the present calling for life. Fairyland, inverted until now in the stories, will be reborn in a union with childhood. All is permitted, for amid business truths, nothing is true.